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STUDIES IN CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY

BEING THE

BOYLE LECTURES, 1920

BY

W. R. MATTHEWS, M.A., B.D.

DEAN OF KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON ; PROFESSOR OF THE PHILOSOPHY OF RELIGION ;
EXAMINING CHAPLAIN TO THE BISHOP OF OXFORD ; CHAPLAIN OF GRAY'S INN

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TO

ALFRED CALDECOTT, D.D., D.Lit.

EMERITUS PROFESSOR OF MENTAL AND MORAL PHILOSOPHY
IN KING'S COLLEGE, LONDON

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PREFACE

I NEED hardly say that the studies printed in this volume make no pretension to exhaustiveness. The reader will not find here even the outlines of a system of philosophy or theology; and he will probably be as conscious as their author that many questions are raised which are not fully discussed, while others which might have been relevant are passed over altogether. It was necessary, if the argument was to be pursued to the point where I intended to leave it, to press swiftly forward over some of the ground; but I hope that I may have an opportunity of considering some of these topics in the two succeeding courses of Boyle Lectures which will deal with Revelation and Incarnation. My main object in these lectures has been to suggest that Christian doctrine rests upon a few simple affirmations of a philosophical character, and to indicate a line of thought which seems to lead to the conclusion that these affirmations are rational. Whatever may be the defects of the treatment, I do not think that it

can be denied that the theme is supremely important. The relations between philosophy and theology need to be cleared up, and the two writers, Dr. Inge and Dr. Rashdall, who have done more than any others in England to elucidate this matter deserve the gratitude of all who care for the future of religion. My own obligations to them are obvious, and are not lessened by the fact that I have not in all points agreed with either. In general, Christian theology suffers at the present time from two opposite defects; it either ignores philosophy completely or treats the utterances of philosophers with exaggerated respect. I am inclined to think that an acquaintance with the actual state of philosophical opinion would purge the mind of contempt and of superstitious reverence to the great advantage both of theology and philosophy.

These lectures are now published as they were delivered, and I have made no attempt to remove some repetitions which were necessary to keep the course of the discussion before the minds of the audience. The lecture on the Moral Argument is an expansion of a paper read to the Aristotelian Society, and I have to thank the Council of that society for permission to use it. Some passages in Lectures V. and VI. appeared in an article in the *Church Quarterly Review*. I am indebted to my friend the Rev. R. Hanson, Chaplain of King's College, for comments

and suggestions, and to the members of my Seminar at King's College for much frank and useful criticism; but my deepest and most abiding obligation is to my old teacher, Professor A. Caldecott, to whom, though it is unworthy, I have ventured to dedicate this book.

W. R. M.

King's College, London,
April 14, 1921.

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LECTURE I

IS THERE A CHRISTIAN PHILOSOPHY?

RELIGION lives in conflict; and the Christian religion more than any other has from the beginning been engaged in a ceaseless warfare for its right to exist. There is no saying of its Founder which has been more completely fulfilled than that in which He declared that He had come to bring not peace but a sword. We have but to glance at the contemporary world to see how this conflict extends itself over every field of human activity. The Christian ethic is hard pressed by ideals of human life which have their roots in impulses which the Gospel would seek to eradicate or transform. The vision of the Kingdom of God is confronted with a vision of a Kingdom of man which would base social intercourse on the denial of supernatural sanctions and the unrestricted war of classes. But the struggle for the existence of religion is nowhere more urgent than in the intellectual sphere. No more dangerous and insidious attack can be imagined than the suggestion, widespread and supported by men of deserved reputation, that the fundamental Christian affirmations

are incompatible with modern knowledge—that the human mind has transcended them and left them behind. It was the conviction of the illustrious founder of these lectures that the truths of Christianity needed defence against objections based on intellectual grounds, and that a principal and necessary means of propagating the Gospel was to commend it to the reason of mankind. It will be my duty, therefore, in attempting to carry out the design of this lectureship, to invite your attention to some of the most controversial problems in the philosophy of religion, and to consider the answers which seem most compatible with the Christian position, giving due weight to the difficulties which have been raised.

But first let us observe that the problems with which we shall be dealing are, in fact, though in themselves theoretical, of the utmost practical importance. The battle for the rights of the religious life, though never ceasing, does not remain concentrated always on the same point. The questions which seemed of greatest moment during the last century were those of the historical foundations of Christianity and the relation between religion and science both natural and historical. Though it cannot be said that either of these controversies has been settled it is, I think, clear that in the mind of the present generation they do not occupy the first place. Though much debatable ground remains, it has become evident that the criticism of the New Testament cannot speak the final

word on the truth or falsehood of the Christian faith. Even though destructive criticism of the most extreme kind should prevail in the study of the New Testament, still the Christian religion would exist as a body of ideas about the world and human life, which might have been robbed indeed of some of the extraneous sources of their authority, but which would still require to be tested by other methods before they could be finally rejected. The conflict between religion and science, in like manner, has now taken a secondary place in the problem of the relation between Christianity and modern knowledge. On the one hand, thoughtful Christians have come to recognise that many Biblical narratives which conflict with the results of natural science are no part of the essential Christian belief, while, on the other hand, a much more accurate notion of the function and limitations of the scientific method has been reached. One of the most useful results of the discussion and criticism of the last half-century has been a recognition of the partial and provisional character of science. The method of natural science is that of abstraction. It deals with one aspect of the universe and attempts to understand that aspect from a special point of view. Valuable, therefore, as the results of the sciences are, they must never be taken as giving a complete account of the nature of the universe. To gather together the broken and partial lights of the special sciences and to evolve a view of the meaning of the whole, is the task of philosophy, which, after a

period of neglect, is now once more taking its place as the highest form of knowledge. To it is committed the office of summing up the insight which has been gained into the various aspects of existence, and, rising above every limited standpoint, to attempt to gain a synthetic apprehension of Reality as a whole.

If this is the nature and purpose of philosophy it must follow that any contradiction between religion and philosophy will be more fundamental than a conflict between religion and science or religion and history. This is felt, I think, by most people who have reflected on the subject at all. To the plain man it seems clear that his religion implies certain beliefs about the structure of the universe and his own place therein, though he might find it difficult to formulate those essential postulates with any precision. To the plain man again it will seem clear that his religion could not be retained, and ought not to be retained, if those beliefs were shown to be false. It is the purpose of this lecture to show that the plain man is right. There is a world-view implicit in all religions, and Christianity, as a specific form of religion, has a definite philosophy of its own. When we are dealing with historical and scientific criticism we may be content to leave many questions open and undecided as not touching the core of our faith, but when we are confronted with philosophical results claiming to be certain and contradicting the view which is involved in Christianity, we are called upon

to defend the central citadel. In the long run we must find some answer or perish. The history of the Christian Church may serve to support the common-sense opinion on this matter: the religious community has never been able to remain indifferent to the philosophical conceptions current in secular thought, and has invariably attempted, with greater or less success, to come to terms with them.

I

Before proceeding to develop this thesis and make it more definite, we must notice some important tendencies in modern Theology which would deny, or at least minimise, the close connection between philosophy and religion which is suggested by history and observation. All these tendencies assume, in some form or other, that religious experience is the primary and perhaps the sole foundation of religious belief, and would sometimes appear to lead to the position that belief is not capable of any further support. Schleiermacher's sentence, "Christliche Glaubensätze sind Auffassungen der christliche frommen Gemuthzustände in der Rede dargestellt,"[1] states the conception of religious affirmations from which these views set out. In his very interesting book, *Belief and Practice*, Mr. Will Spens appears to argue in the same manner that the creeds can be proved to be true by reference to religious experience

[1] *Glaubenslehre*, § 15.

regarded as existing prior to and independently of them.

The confidence with which religious experience is appealed to must lead us to examine how far this appeal is justified, and to inquire how much weight may really be allowed to the intuitions of religious men. It is to be feared that the reliance upon religious experience is becoming in many quarters, a catchword which covers destitution. The motives which lead men to claim an unquestionable authority for religious experience are both obvious and respectable. It is a true and important piece of insight that the religious life has an independent value, and that it must not be cramped by the Procrustean method of fitting it into any philosophical system which happens to be fashionable. It is also true that the moral and spiritual experience of mankind must occupy a commanding position in any sane philosophy, and it is indeed vitally important that spiritual values should be counted among the primary data of philosophy. But we may admit all this and yet be very far from assenting to the proposition that uncriticised experience should be regarded as the final court of appeal in matters of belief: and the briefest examination will suffice to show that any such arrogation of immunity from rational criticism is untenable.

For, first, there is no reason why religious experience should be treated in a different manner from all other kinds of experience. The just claim for

religious experience that it should be reckoned, along with our experience of the external world, as a part of the "given" with which thought has to deal, carries with it the admission that it is an object on which thought must play in order to extricate its true significance. We have good reason to know that it is dangerous to accept any experience at its face value: in no sphere where a test is possible are we acquainted with an infallible experience: our knowledge of the real world is built up on a criticised and sifted experience. It may fairly be asked of those who would urge upon us the acceptance of religious experience as the solution of all our problems that they should produce some reason for attributing to it an infallibility which is absent from all other kinds. It may safely be predicted that no reason will be forthcoming. For, secondly, religious experience is not in harmony with itself. Though there may be an inner coherence in the religious consciousness which thought can bring to light, yet its first effect is that of discordance, it speaks with a variety of voices and challenges criticism and interpretation. There is nothing which more clearly demands to be understood than religious experience. Writers who adopt the position which we are criticising have usually in view some special type of religious life which they hold to be normative; but it must be evident that the selection of one type among many can only be made by the help of a criterion which is not religious experience. Selection implies criticism; and it may be presumed that those

who, for instance, treat Christian piety as the example of religion *par excellence* have some rational defence to offer for their choice. It will be found that no defence can be offered which will not involve, explicitly or implicitly, a view of the nature of Reality. And, thirdly, it is contrary to historical fact to represent religious experience as a movement of the human spirit which develops independently of other spiritual activities and free from the taint of philosophical criticism and speculation. This is evident whether we take the race or the individual as our guide. In truth, a principal factor in the progress of the religious consciousness has been reflection of a theoretical kind. If the critical intellect has at times damped religious enthusiasm and caused robust faith to be "sickled o'er with the pale cast of thought," it has also acted as a cleansing fire, destroying unworthy conceptions of deity and thereby clearing the way for a new and higher manifestation of the religious consciousness. And, fourthly, I am inclined to wonder whether the advocates of an uncritical acceptance of religious experience have ever troubled to learn by introspection what religious experience really is. It is surely a complete misreading of the order of events to suppose that experience comes first and afterwards gives rise to belief about God and the world. On the contrary, ideas of God and of His relation with the soul, of redemption and the aim of life, are accepted from the social environment and on authority. Experience grows round them. The vigour of the religious life

depends upon the degree in which these ideas become living centres of emotion and will, and progress in religion is closely connected with the work of the mind upon these concepts, whereby it deepens and purifies them in the light of the total experience of the self and its advancing powers of moral and intellectual insight. From the beginning, religious experience is indissolubly connected with affirmations about the universe which are capable of philosophical criticism and interpretation.

These general considerations must lead us to regard with suspicion any theological system which pretends to draw a sharp distinction between religion and philosophy. But there are three schools of thought which demand some special attention on account of their influence and the distinction of their adherents. Ritschlianism, Mysticism, and Modernism, in different degrees and from different points of view, proclaim the emancipation of religion from philosophy.

The thought of Albrecht Ritschl has exercised a profound influence upon the theology of Germany and of English protestantism. There can be no doubt that he is one of the formative minds of the nineteenth century. But in spite of many excellent expositions of his doctrine it is by no means easy to seize the central idea of his system. It must be confessed that he is frequently inconsistent with himself, and our task is not made easier by the fact that most of his distinctive tenets have been abandoned by one or other of his followers. Nevertheless, it is sufficiently

clear that Ritschl demanded a complete severance between theology and metaphysics, and asserted for the former the right of independent development. This claim is based partly on historical grounds. As a historian he finds that the purity of the Gospel has been adulterated by the intrusion of conceptions derived from Greek philosophy, a thought which has been elaborated by his greatest disciple, Adolph Harnack, in his *History of Dogma*. But historical considerations are not the chief ground on which Ritschl bases his declaration of theological independence. It depends primarily upon his peculiar view of the respective natures and spheres of religion and speculative thought. Thus, speaking of the Greek fathers and of the scholastic theology, he remarks: "The division of the material of Theology into propositions given by reason and propositions given by revelation is a method whose validity can no longer be maintained. In opposition thereto there has gradually come into force the contrary principle that religion and theoretical knowledge are different functions of spirit, which, when they deal with the same objects, are not even partially coincident, but wholly diverge."[1] This is no chance *obiter dictum*, but a settled conviction. Ritschl is even prepared to maintain that the question of the existence of God is outside the purview of rational inquiry, and belongs to the religious consciousness, which is taken to be a distinct and separate activity of spirit. "For religious

[1] *Justification and Reconciliation*, E.T., p. 194.

cognition the existence of God is beyond question, for the activity of God becomes to us a matter of conviction through the attitude we take up to the world as religious men." [1]

All this seems clear enough, however much we may feel inclined to dispute its truth. But we must bear in mind, in considering Ritschl's system, his peculiar view of the limits of philosophy. In his opinion, as in that of Mr. Bertrand Russell,[2] philosophy has mistaken its true vocation when it has attempted to rise to a synthetic conception of Reality as a whole. The ambition to interpret the universe, to attain to a world-view, is no part of the business of philosophy, and belongs properly to the domain of religion. "The intermingling and collision of religion and philosophy always arises from the fact that the latter claims to produce in its own fashion a unified view of the world. This, however, betrays rather an impulse religious in its nature, which philosophers ought to have distinguished from the cognitive methods they follow. For in all philosophical systems the affirmation of a supreme law of existence, from which they undertake to deduce the world as a whole, is a departure from the strict application of the philosophic method, and betrays itself as being quite as much an object of the intuitive imagination as God and the world are for religious thought." [3] Such passages as this suggest that the gulf which Ritschl has fixed

[1] *Justification and Reconciliation*, E.T., p. 216.
[2] *Our Knowledge of the External World*, Lect. I.
[3] *Justification and Reconciliation*, E.T., p. 207, cf. also p. 215.

between religion and philosophy is artificial, and is due to a highly questionable conception of the nature of the latter. As we shall see, the interpretation of the world as a whole is the essential business of philosophy, and, if this is true, we may claim that Ritschl, when due allowance has been made for his peculiar nomenclature, is really to be considered as supporting the conclusion that religion and philosophy are intimately connected.

It is scarcely open to doubt that Ritschl's attack on rational theology was valuable as a protest against the exaggerated reverence paid to the Hegelian system. His exclamation, "The Absolute is an idol," may have our sympathy when we remember the kind of Absolute which has been too frequently proposed as a substitute for the living God: but his protest was itself an exaggeration on the other side, and its consequences follow him through the rest of his theology. Having renounced the hope of giving a rational justification for the fundamental affirmations of Christianity, he is thrown back on the idea of revelation. But here again he cannot escape the nemesis of his contempt for philosophy, for he is never able to give any clear account of the source from which revelation derives its authority, or of the manner of its recognition by the believer. His frequent hints that the moral consciousness is the organ of religious intuition indicate a valuable line of thought which has been followed by later members of his school in agreement with the Neo-Kantian

philosophy. But it is sufficiently obvious that to maintain the primacy of the practical reason is, in reality, to propound a whole system of philosophy, and to postulate a view of the nature of the universe as definite as that which holds perception to be the only source of real knowledge. We must conclude, then, that Ritschl's attempt to separate theology from philosophy breaks down. It is based upon a misunderstanding of the nature of the two studies, and, in fact, the development of the Ritschlian theology itself illustrates the close connection between them. The service which Ritschlianism has rendered to Christian thought has been in bringing out the hopelessness of any alliance between Christianity and a narrowly intellectualist philosophy which does not give due consideration to the moral consciousness.

In spite of the settled antipathy with which the Ritschlians regard mysticism, there is a genuine analogy between the two standpoints in connection with the subject which we are now discussing. Just as Ritschl proposed to transfer religious judgements from the jurisdiction of the speculative intellect to that of the religious consciousness, so some writers on Mysticism have found in the experiences of the great mystics ground for supposing that religious beliefs are derived from some irrational or super-rational source. The character of "immediacy" which attaches to the religious life of the great exponents of this form of spiritual experience has led many to base

a new conception of revelation upon them. It would be ridiculous to accuse Dr. Inge or Baron von Hügel of denying the intellectual element in religion, but others who have engaged in the same studies have not been equally circumspect. In such a work as Miss Evelyn Underhill's *Mystic Way* we may find the suggestion that religious beliefs are the symbolical expressions of the immediate experience of persons endowed with a special faculty of intuition of the Divine. It is further suggested that we must accept the deliverances of these religious geniuses without question or criticism, because they are in possession of a vision which is not ours. It would be tedious and needless to repeat the objections which we have already made to the unquestioning reliance upon experience of any kind. It must be clear that, in principle, these objections will apply to the experience of a "religious genius" no less than to that of a commonplace person.

A serious problem, however, seems to be raised by the fact that the creative personalities in religious history have commonly been far removed from the type of mind which we should call philosophical, and have gained their insight, as it would appear, by a method more direct than that of intellectual contemplation. It would be irreverent, we may think, to describe Jesus as a great philosopher, and we are wont to draw a contrast between the inspired Teacher who spoke with authority and Socrates the indomitable asker of questions. Yet, well founded as this

contrast is, we may observe that any orthodox Christology must hold that Jesus was in possession of that at which philosophies aim. For, unless He enjoyed an adequate knowledge of the nature of the universe and its purpose, there can be no security that His deliverances on man's place in Reality, and the duties and hopes arising therefrom, have any finality. But it is, of course, true that, so far as we know, He did not reach His conclusions about the nature of God and man by any process of discursive thought. There are in His utterances no arguments such as dialecticians use, nor is there in His teaching much that could be called "reasoning" in the common meaning of that word.

But to argue from all this that there is no philosophical element in the Gospel would be an egregious error. Spinoza, in a familiar passage, has drawn a distinction between different levels of knowledge which is as old as Plato, and has had the approval of Mr. Bosanquet. The lowest kind of knowledge is mere opinion which is accepted on authority or from some other uncriticised source. Above this comes that kind of knowledge which is derived from reasoning, and is the result of drawing correctly conclusions from self-evident or generally accepted premises. The most perfect species of knowledge is *scientia intuitiva*, the immediate apprehension of truth as truth, an insight which grasps the conclusion and the grounds of the conclusion in one act. This third type is the ideal of knowledge towards which all

other kinds of knowing constantly strive.[1] We may affirm, therefore, that if a complete and adequate insight into the meaning of the universe and of human life should emerge in the course of history, it would be of the intuitive character, and would manifest those qualities which we have noticed in the teaching of Jesus. But this does not mean that the content of His teaching is not truth of the kind which philosophy seeks, nor does it imply that we are bound to pass it by or accept it as incapable of rational consideration because based upon an irrational or super-rational experience. On the contrary, it will be our highest wisdom to draw out the grounds on which it rests and to relate it with the whole of our knowledge and experience, for only thus can we confirm in ourselves and in others the conviction that Jesus is the truth of the world and of God.

A few remarks are necessary on the interesting and hopeful movement which has acquired the name of Modernism. They must needs be inadequate and inconclusive, because a tolerably full account of the positions adopted by Modernist writers would require a careful estimate of the relative importance of the writers, and an attempt to disentangle their fundamental conceptions from the details of application to particular problems. There is, however, a common motive which inspires all the leaders of this school: it is a perception of the inadequacy of the narrow

[1] Spinoza, *Ethics*, ii. 40. 2; Bosanquet, *Principle of Individuality and Value*, p. 65.

intellectualism of the official dogmatic theology of the Roman church, and a desire to substitute for it a treatment of doctrine which is more in accordance with modern habits of thought. I think, however, that it must be confessed that this necessary protest has not infrequently led to a use of language which errs on the opposite side, and might give some ground for supposing that Modernism is opposed to the application of every kind of rational method in questions of religion. Thus we are assured that "the intellectual element in faith exists, but it exists as a derivative from some profounder and more vital action of faith." [1] And this summary statement may be taken as fairly representative of a common Modernist manner of speech.

Now this kind of utterance may be no more than a somewhat emphatic assertion that the intellectual element is implicit rather than explicit in some types of religion, and with that we should have no quarrel. But when we turn to the Modernist account of the development of dogma we find good reason for believing that we are confronted once more with the view that religious affirmations can be based upon uncriticised experience. The works of Loisy and Tyrrell are largely directed to the vindication of the place of the Church in the evolution of Christianity, and to establish the right of Christian history to be regarded as an integral part of the significance of the Gospel. But if this principle is pushed so far as to

[1] A. L. Lilley, *Ency. of Religion and Ethics*, vol. viii. p. 767.

mean that doctrine is to be based solely on the corporate experience of the Christian community, we are at once embarked on a very perilous journey. There is no means, beyond individual preference, of distinguishing between valuable and veridical experience and the vagaries of corporate caprice or collective superstition. Newman saw more clearly the true conditions of a doctrine of development when he attempted to formulate criteria for distinguishing true developments from false, and no expenditure of eloquence on the organic evolution of the Church will really save us from this necessity. I do not, of course, wish to deny that there is a legitimate development of Christian truth in the course of Christian history, but I would urge that, in so far as the development is an enrichment and not a perversion, it consists in a dialectical process by which the implications of the fundamental Christian ideas are made more explicit and their applications more far-reaching. But it is hardly necessary to enlarge upon this topic, since it is evident that, even if we accept its own premises, Modernism does not escape from the contact with philosophy. It rests upon a view of the world. It assumes that the religious experience of the Christian Church is a trustworthy authority, and it must rule out, therefore, from the beginning any possibility that the whole mass of experience should be the product of illusion. Now unless this assumption is made by an act of the most arbitrary choice it must be capable of defence, and it is impossible to imagine

any defence which would not, in the end, involve a doctrine of the general structure of Reality. These observations are made with no polemical intention, and it is likely that no Modernist would wish to quarrel with them; but it may be useful to draw attention to forms of expression which are at least misleading, lest Modernism should be found turning its assaults not against dogmatic rationalism but against reason.

We must now attempt to sum up the results, largely negative, of our discussion. Starting with the common-sense opinion that the conclusions of philosophical inquiry cannot be indifferent to the religious believer, and that a discrepancy between the religious view of the world and that commended to us by reflection must needs cause disquiet, we proceeded to examine some theories on which the intimate connection between philosophy and religion has been denied or minimised. We found that a common motive of efforts to emancipate theology from philosophy was the desire to reach some ground of religious certitude which would be exempt from criticism, and that a common method proposed for attaining this was to claim for religious experience some indefeasible authority which could not be called in question. But a consideration of religious experience in general did not reveal any good reason for believing that it could substantiate a claim to this kind of authority. When we went on to examine briefly some systems in which the principle has been worked out we were led to

the conclusion that in each case the pretended independence of philosophy was illusory. Ritschlianism seemed to imply a distinctive view of the nature of Reality, and to maintain its apparent seclusion from philosophical debate only by a narrow and unhistorical definition of the scope of philosophy. In the same way, those theories of religion which have invited us to stake our religious belief on the experience of the "religious genius," or the collective consciousness of the community proved to be untenable. But our conclusion need not be wholly negative. With lamentable exaggeration, the views which we have rejected have insisted upon an important truth. They have at least brought prominently before us the existence of the moral and religious consciousness: they may remind us, not that philosophy is irrelevant for religious thought, but of the futility of a metaphysic which leaves the moral and religious aspects of the world out of account. Nor must it be thought that in criticising a blind reliance upon so-called "immediate" experience we have cast the least doubt upon the value or the validity of the religious consciousness. We have, in fact, been preserving the possibility that its validity should become manifest. One who has a deep faith in the truth of the religious attitude towards life will be slow to believe that its affirmations cannot be shown to hold in every sphere of human experience, and he will hesitate to indulge his fear that his religion may be proved false if that fear should lead him

to a position from which it is incapable of being proved true.

II

We must now undertake a more direct investigation of the problem before us, which is in general the relation between philosophy and religion, and in particular the possibility of a Christian philosophy. Our discussion will perhaps gain in definiteness if we set out from the statement of a position which is the opposite of that which we have been criticising in the earlier part of this lecture. There will be no difficulty in finding such a statement, for if there is considerable support among theologians for the view that religion and philosophy are independent of one another, there is still greater weight of testimony among philosophers that they are identical. This conception of the nature of religion has recently been put in a challenging form by the distinguished Italian thinker Benedetto Croce. We may best understand his opinion if we compare it with that of Hegel of whom he is, in many respects, a follower. As is well known, Hegel did not believe that his philosophy was in any sense hostile to Christianity; so far was he from thinking so that he supposed himself to have given a rational proof both of the absoluteness of the Christian religion and of the truth of its essential doctrines. But, at the same time, it is also the fact that for Hegel religion was not the highest activity of spirit. The truth of religion, so he taught, was to be

found in philosophy; and, we need hardly add, in the Hegelian philosophy. There is therefore some justification for Croce's remark that "it is a philosophy which is radically irreligious, because it is not content to oppose itself to religion or to range it alongside of itself, but it resolves religion into itself and substitutes itself for it."[1] Nevertheless, it was probably not Hegel's view that religion is a transitory activity to be transcended and absorbed in philosophy; it remains a "moment" in the development of spirit. This is the point where Croce goes beyond his teacher, or, as it might be argued, draws out the full consequences of the earlier thinker's principles. To Croce religion is simply an imperfect and misleading form of philosophy which can exist only so long as the human mind is unable to rise to a theoretical apprehension of Reality. It is destined to be absorbed and abolished. "When that which is perfect is come then that which is in part shall be done away."

Beginning with the assumption that religion is identical with myth, Croce proceeds to argue that myth is primitive philosophy, since it is an effort to explain the world. Myth is, however, necessarily imperfect philosophy, because it makes use of representations instead of concepts. He goes on: "Since then, religion is identical with myth, and since myth is not distinguishable from philosophy by any positive

[1] Hegel's *Logic*, Wallace's translation, p. 73 f., and Croce, *What is Living and Dead in the Philosophy of Hegel*, E.T. pp. 70, 71.

character, but only as false philosophy from true philosophy, and as error from the truth which rectifies and contains it, we must affirm that religion, so far as it is truth, is identical with philosophy, or as can also be said, that philosophy is the true religion. All ancient and modern thought about religions, which have always been dissolved in philosophies, leads to this result. . . . When religion does not dissolve into philosophy and wishes to persist together with it, or to substitute itself for philosophy, it reveals itself as effective error ; that is to say, as an arbitrary attempt against truth, due to habits, feelings, and individual passions." [1] The greater part of the rest of this lecture will be devoted to disengaging the element of truth in this pronouncement, but I cannot refrain from pointing out here the astonishingly "intellectualist" bias of Croce's account of religion. To make myth the whole of religion is indeed a drastic simplification, and to succeed in dealing with the religious consciousness as if there were no such things as worship and the experience of redemption is a triumph of loyalty to hypothesis in defiance of fact.

It will conduce to clearness if I state at once the position which I desire to defend. In the first place, it seems to me obvious that in their present stages of development religion and philosophy are distinct from one another, and that there is a true sense in which the philosophical attitude of mind differs from the religious. Further, so far as can be seen, this

[1] Croce, *Logic*, E.T. pp. 439-47.

distinction will persist for an indefinite period, since there is no philosophy which can really substantiate the claim to include all that religion has of value, nor, on the other hand, has religion succeeded in formulating its concepts in so definite and coherent a manner that it may venture to demand the absorption of philosophy in itself. But it appears to me that Croce is right in holding that there is no inherent and necessary distinction between them. The divergence which actually exists arises, not from the essential natures of the two activities, but from their imperfect development and from historical causes. In so far as they approach their ideal completion they will converge and become united. They are therefore to be regarded as different aspects of one movement of the human spirit, and the question whether religion is to be absorbed in philosophy or philosophy in religion ceases to have any importance, and may be left to the lexicographers of a remote future to decide.

If we now recur to Croce's argument we may agree that all religions have, explicitly or implicitly, a view of the world. However mistaken we may consider his complete identification of religion with mythology we can hardly question that mythology is an integral part of the lower types of religion; nor does it seem open to doubt that, when religion outgrows its childhood and becomes reflective, mythology passes over into theology. Some plausible objections to this generalisation may be drawn from the early history of religion. Many writers would be inclined to

regard mythology as a late development, and to hold that the origin of religion is pre-rational. It cannot be denied that a great deal of mythology appears to have been elaborated as explanation of actions and inhibitions which were in existence before the explanatory myth arose. But it does not follow that these rituals and taboos were observed in the first instance for no reason at all. It is easy for us to infer that rites and customs which to us are entirely irrational are equally so to the savages who practise them. But an action which is irrational in the sense of being performed for an absurd reason is not irrational in the sense of being performed for no reason at all. Ritual has a grave significance for those who take part in it; and that significance depends upon the beliefs which they entertain, vague and incoherent as they may be, about the nature of the world and their relation with its unseen forces. It may be remarked also that the feeling of dependence in which many, following Schleiermacher, would find the germ of religion, involves the conception, however dim and confused, of some power or person of a supernatural kind. We are thus led to the conclusion that religion, even in its earliest or lowest stages, contains a view of the world, is an attempt at explanation, and is therefore a rudimentary philosophy. After what has already been said it will, I hope, be needless to labour the point that the higher religions are equally committed to a view of the world, though in them it takes the form of theology rather than of myth. It would be

an understatement to say that every religion has a theology; the truth is that every religion is, in one aspect, a theology; it rests upon a certain view of the nature of Reality, and if that view has to be abandoned under the stress of criticism, the religion of which it was an integral part cannot hope to survive.

Let us, however, confirm our view and make it more definite by reviewing some of the possible methods which might be proposed of drawing a fundamental distinction between philosophy and religion. As we have already noticed, Croce has strangely neglected to include the hope of salvation among the characteristics of religion. This is a serious omission, and it might be argued that here is the real and inherent divergence between religion and philosophy. The former, it may be said, sets before itself as its goal the attainment of blessedness or salvation: its aim is practical. It promises to lift the soul out of a condition of impotence and fear into one of peace and freedom. Philosophy, on the other hand, we shall be told, has a different purpose: its object is theoretical. It seeks above all to know, and it cares nothing, or should care nothing, for the practical consequences of its conclusions. I do not deny that this way of putting the case is sufficiently true for many purposes, nor that it sums up with some approach to accuracy the general historical relation between religious teaching and speculative thought; but I do not think that the distinction

suggested is capable of being raised to a distinction in principle.

The difference between a theoretical and practical interest, which seems at first sight clear enough, tends, when we attempt to think it out, to become confused and to vanish away. As is well known, the Pragmatists have denied the possibility of a purely theoretical interest, and have urged that every intellectual process is the effort to satisfy some practical need. The controversy which has raged round this assertion has brought out very clearly the precarious nature of the distinction between theoretical and practical. In his masterly essay on *Truth and Practice* Mr. Bradley has shown that there is no ultimate difference between the two attitudes of mind, though they may be conveniently distinguished for the relative purposes of life. "On the one hand, no activity is barely practical. There is in the end no activity which exists for its own sake as a process, without any regard for its own nature and quality and in abstraction from all that can be regarded as a product. On the other hand, we may say that in the end all activity is practical. For there is nothing which is apart from process and change in existence." [1] If therefore the difference between the theoretical and the practical is itself not ultimate, it can hardly be put forward as the basis of an ultimate distinction between religion and philosophy.

But we will not leave the question to be decided

[1] *Essays on Truth and Reality*, p. 103.

solely on the ground of general principles, for it is not difficult to show that, on the one hand, motives which would generally be called practical enter into philosophy, while, on the other hand, even the religious idea of salvation contains elements which must be described as theoretical. Let us remind ourselves that philosophy exists in individual minds, and is the outcome of the efforts of individual thinkers. The labour of reflection is undertaken for the purpose of obtaining some satisfaction for the thinker, and in this respect philosophy may be said to be a practical activity. Nor is the element of salvation or redemption absent from the motive of philosophical effort. No one would be impelled to philosophise about a world which he found already satisfactory. The attempt to attain an insight into Reality is essentially a movement to transcend the limits of the actual self, and reach a life of greater power, harmony, and freedom. That something akin to the religious conception of salvation or blessedness is inherent in the aim of thought is confirmed by a glance at the great historical systems. Wherever we find speculation breaking through the preliminary problems of the theory of knowledge and method and going forward to its goal we discover also that an experience which is, in the larger sense, mystical or religious lies at the end. It may be that this experience is an irrelevant addition to the body of thought which leads up to it, but this would not have been the opinion of the thinkers themselves. Plato and Spinoza offer us

more than a bare theoretical satisfaction ; they show the way, or so they believed, to a life in touch with the Eternal. It will be objected, no doubt, that there are many systems which have the opposite effect, and that it would be ridiculous to argue that Materialism or Naturalism has a religious aspect. But this remark is true only in the sense that the kind of deliverance which they offer to the individual is sharply opposed to that of the great religions. It is none the less a fact that they aim at a species of deliverance, even though it be merely the escape from superstition and illusion, and the peace which comes from the abandonment of baseless hopes. In every case the motive is to set the individual in right relation with the universe. However sad and meagre the blessedness may be, it is still the vision of a blessedness beyond the natural condition of man which spurs the labour of the thinker.

Nor, on the other side, can we say that the aim of religion is in any intelligible sense purely practical. If we agree that the redemption of the soul is the purpose, or a part of the purpose of religion, we shall also be compelled to admit that redemption must mean placing the individual in right relations with the universe. But it is clear that without an insight into the nature of the universe a claim on the part of religion to confer this benefit must be futile. It is thus no accident that all conceptions of salvation include the notion of enlightenment, of sanctification and freedom through the truth. To illustrate so

obvious a fact by reference to ideas of salvation which obtain in the religions of the world would be a waste of time. To know God is at once the simplest and the most comprehensive description of blessedness. It means, indeed, something more and deeper than to know *about* God; it is more perfect knowledge, not less; an apprehension which has transcended the discursive processes of thought and become intuitive.

We have found, therefore, that the proposal to draw an absolute distinction between religion and philosophy on the ground that one is practical and the other theoretical will not bear criticism. The distinction between practical and theoretical is itself only relative, and cannot be made the basis of an absolute distinction. And, even if we ignore this difficulty, we are unable to maintain that the aim of religion is wholly practical, or that the aim of philosophy is wholly theoretical. Whatever, then, may be the historical value of the opposition of philosophy and religion as theoretical and practical respectively, it cannot be made an absolute opposition. The difference is one of emphasis and not of essence.

Let us now turn to another possible suggestion for differentiating between religion and philosophy. Admitting that it is impossible to discover any distinction in principle between the ends which religion and philosophy set before them, we may perhaps be inclined to argue that they are distinguishable by their presuppositions and their data. Though

both may be moving towards the same goal they may seem to be travelling by roads that are widely separated. Religion, it may be said, relies upon revelation; it accepts the guidance of some non-rational authority, and, in fact, too often moves at the command of popular superstition rather than in accordance with the dictates of reason. In so far as religion is rational at all it is reason in chains, and has no right to claim equality with a movement of reason which is free to follow the argument wherever it may lead. We cannot but confess that this contrast has some foundation in historical fact. All the higher religions owe their origin and their character to great creative personalities whose experiences have become normative for the religions which they have founded. Nor can we deny that modern philosophy has, not completely but to a large extent, ignored the possibility of revelation. But before we accept this as a permanent attribute of philosophy it will be well to look a little more closely into the nature of revelation and the causes which have led philosophy to reject it.

It has doubtless been a good thing that, for a period, thought should have stood free of revelation and should have assumed a merely critical attitude towards it. But I would suggest that the time has come when this aloofness ought to be abandoned. Enlightened religion has now passed beyond that conception of revelation as a rigid and purely external authority against which a protest was needed in the

interest of religion itself; and with the modern idea of revelation philosophy can have no permanent quarrel. For it is a superstition to suppose that thought can work without data. The philosopher does not spin theories in his own inner consciousness without reference to the given world of fact. He must deal with experience, and, so far as possible, with experience as a whole. Yet this aim would be completely chimerical if every fact of experience were accepted as equally significant. Unless some selection were made the immense complexity of the "given" would prevent the inquiry from advancing a single step. And in fact this is what happens. Philosophies differ from one another by reason of the level of experience which they take as fundamental. Now, among the facts of the universe is the existence of personalities who have been the means of bringing to light values which, apart from them, would not have existed. It is at least clear that among the facts of the world are the lives and characters and influence of Buddha and Jesus of Nazareth. The universe has produced them. When we contemplate them we are aware of unsuspected characteristics of Reality. They reveal to us one aspect, and that surely not a negligible one, of the world; an aspect which without them we should hardly have divined. I need not say that I am not arguing that any religious or moral experience should be accepted without criticism as a voice from on high which it would be impious to question, nor do I believe that religion, if it is wise,

will make this demand for revelation; but I say that what the religious consciousness fundamentally means by revelation is a fact of experience as indubitable as the existence of the world of perception. That much philosophic speculation should have ignored this element of the world which it seeks to explain is a lamentable historical truth, but it means nothing more than that many philosophies are false; they have condemned themselves to error by a perverse blindness to a part of the data with which they have to deal. But any philosophy which can hope to be adequate must reckon with these facts, and, whether it use the word "revelation" or not, the thing for which the word stands will not be excluded from its consideration.

Since then all the ways of drawing an absolute distinction between religion and philosophy have turned out to be unsatisfactory, we are brought to the view that in idea and essence they are not separate. We must agree with Croce that they are, in some sense, identical. But our study of the question has also revealed that Croce is mistaken in his interpretation of this truth. His view that religion is philosophy speaking in parables is based upon a conception of religion which is too narrow, since it leaves out all reference to salvation and revelation. But not less is his conception of philosophy too narrow, for we have seen reason to believe that it too is not merely theoretical, and that it also is moved by the impulse to transcend the natural condition of man and must

work in the light of the highest manifestations of Reality. Philosophy will not absorb religion nor religion philosophy, if by that we mean that either in its present stage of development can take the place of the other. Nevertheless, in their ideal development they will coincide; and I think we may say that, of the two, religion will need less transformation than philosophy to attain its completion, for, with all its incoherence, it has preserved the elements of its nature, while philosophy too often attempts to claim a purely theoretical interest which, while it has no foundation in fact, has the effect of causing a misconception of the real goal.

While we reject the opinion that religion should be absorbed in philosophy as at present developed, we shall not fall into the opposite absurdity of denying the legitimacy of the present existence of philosophy side by side with religion. The ideal development has not yet been reached: the implicit synthesis has not become actual. Each has a special function to fulfil, and by their tensions and antagonisms as well as by their agreements each may enrich the other. It is the office of religion to insist upon the supreme significance of a certain department of experience, and to propagate that experience among all sorts and conditions of men, to give "light and understanding to the simple." The special function of the philosopher is to insist on rationality, to guard against the development of a view of the world and an attitude towards life which are one-sided and incomplete. We

cannot hope to see the lion and the lamb lie down together, nor is one likely to devour the other; but we may at least strive for a religion without fanaticism and a philosophy which is not cynical.

The question, "Is there a Christian philosophy?" has been answered. Since we can draw no ultimate distinction between religion and philosophy, we are compelled to believe that the two are indissolubly united. All religion implies a view of the world, and every specific religion is connected with and depends upon a characteristic conception of the universe. This is no extraneous addition which may be changed or discarded without affecting the religion, it is an integral part of the religion. Christianity can claim no exemption from this rule; and it will be our business in the next lecture to describe the main outlines of its *Weltanschauung*.

LECTURE II

THE CHRISTIAN VIEW OF THE WORLD

In our last lecture we reached the conclusion that Christianity must have a peculiar view of the world by reason of the fact that it is a specific type of religion. But a difficulty arises when we examine Christianity as an historical system, and a doubt may suggest itself whether Christianity is indeed one religion at all. Is not, it may be asked, what we call the Christian religion in truth a succession or series of religions in which it would be difficult to find any common element but the name? We must confess that there is a wide difference between the conception of God and the world involved in primitive Christianity and that of mediaeval sacramentalism, and again probably between both of them and the view held by enlightened believers of the present day. This impression of incoherent diversity is strengthened when we include in our survey the multitudinous sects which have lived and still live on the fringe of the central movement. I can imagine a man exclaiming, in no flippant spirit, that it is more difficult to discover what Christianity is than to believe it when

it be discovered. The question, What is Christianity? which has been debated for the last century, is therefore no mere historical problem: it is one of the utmost practical moment. To find an answer to it is a necessary preliminary to the discussion of the claims of the Gospel on our belief.

The answers which have been given to this question seem to fall naturally into two classes which are distinguished from each other by the principles upon which they are based. The view which has been developed by liberal Protestantism is that Christianity consists in the teaching given by Jesus. For such writers as Prof. Harnack and Leo Tolstoy, to take examples from different types of mind, the "simple Gospel" is the essence of Christianity. It is summed up in a few elementary principles, such as the Fatherhood of God and the Kingdom of Heaven, and these are themselves based upon the religious consciousness of Jesus.[1] On this theory the doctrinal development of the Christian faith and its alliance with Greek thought are corruptions of the simplicity of the Gospel which may have been inevitable but are now irrelevant. We must observe that this school of thought treats the history of the Church or of Christian society as having properly nothing to do with the question of the nature of Christianity; and this is often extended to cover the preceding history as well as that succeeding the life of Jesus, for many writers, more particularly those who belong to the Ritschlian school, refuse to

[1] Cf. Harnack, *What is Christianity?* Tolstoy, *How to read the Gospels.*

consider Christianity as forming a part of the general religious evolution of mankind.

On the other hand, there are those who have adopted the principle that Christianity as a whole is an objective and coherent system, whose meaning cannot be grasped by attention to one section only of its life in the world. If we would know what it is we must study it in the institutions which have expressed its nature, in the Church or in Christian civilisation. In the opening pages of the *Development of Christian Doctrine*, Newman has stated the principle very clearly. "Christianity has been long enough in the world to justify us in dealing with it as a fact in the world's history. . . . It has long since passed beyond the letter of documents and the reasoning of individual minds, and has become public property. 'Its sound has gone out into all lands and its words unto the ends of the world.' It has had from the first an objective existence, and has thrown itself upon the great concourse of men. Its home is in the world; and to know what it is we must seek it in the world, and hear the world's witness of it." [1] As is well known, a similar principle has been adopted by the Modernists in their polemic against liberal Protestantism, though they have carried the doctrine of development to lengths which would have been abhorrent to Newman. They have insisted on the objective existence of Christianity as a living and growing whole, and have emphasised the inevitable

[1] Newman, *Development of Christian Doctrine*, Introduction.

danger of subjectivity which lies in an attempt to disengage the original Gospel. "L'Évangile a existée indépendamment de nous; tâchons de l'entendre en lui-même, avant de l'interpréter par rapport à nos préférences ou à nos besoins." [1] The extreme development of this manner of approaching the problem leads to the position that the teaching and life of Jesus have no essential connection with the nature of Christianity. Thus we find Mr. Bosanquet writing: "The study of Christianity is the study of a great world-experience; the assignment to individuals of shares in its development is a problem for scholars, whose conclusions, though of considerable human interest, can never be of supreme importance." [2]

It appears to me that neither of these methods of dealing with the problem is completely satisfactory, while at the same time both contain an element of truth. The Christian religion is both Christian and religion. There is a true sense in which Christianity may be said to be Christ. It is historical and takes its rise from the life and teaching of an historical person. Moreover, the Christian faith has centred round the person of Christ in a manner which is fundamentally different from the adhesion of disciples to the recorded words of a great teacher. Jesus has been to the Christian consciousness not only one who spoke true things about God but one

[1] Loisy, *L'Évangile et l'Église*, p. ix.

[2] Bosanquet, *Principle of Individuality and Value*, p. 79. The same opinion is, I think, implicit in Royce's *Problem of Christianity*.

who in his own life and character supremely revealed the nature of God. All this is trite enough but it is none the less true and important.

To describe Christianity as a world-experience and to leave out the fact that this experience is mediated through the historical person of Jesus is surely to misconceive the whole matter. Thus, though I would not be prepared to say that historical proof of the complete inhistoricity of the Gospels would destroy the Christian religion, it does seem clear that any such result of historical criticism would modify it in a fundamental manner. We must therefore agree that Christ is, in some sense, the norm of the Christian religion. Our criteria for the testing of its developments must be derived from Him, and we must be prepared to confess that much which has passed under His name has not the mark of His spirit. But, on the other hand, the Christian religion is a religion. We cannot lift it bodily out of the general story of religious development and treat it as if it were entirely unrelated with the history of religions. Further, it is unreasonable to assume that the historical development of Christianity has no light to throw upon its nature. Though we are rightly warned that spiritual impulses are subject to corruption and distortion when they issue forth into the world to struggle with other movements, it is also true that creative concepts have an indefinite power of expansion and we may therefore hope to find, along with corruption, explication.

I intend, therefore, in this lecture to attempt to show the place which Jesus and the Gospel occupy in the development of the religious consciousness, and to elucidate the special view of God and man which is implied in Christianity by means of comparison and contrast with other conceptions. It is my hope that the result of such an investigation will be to bring out the fundamental affirmations of Christianity and also to show that the Gospel is the culminating point of the evolution of religion.

I

The origin of religion is still the subject of controversy, nor can it be said that any definite conclusions have been established with regard to its earliest developments. We may, however, regard it as certain that religion has, like all other activities of mind, evolved from humble beginnings. If it is dangerous to assume that primitive religion is in all points identical with that of savages as they are known to us, it can hardly be doubted that in many respects the primitive forms resembled the religion of savages and were in the highest degree childlike. The points at issue are not important for our purpose, though of great interest in themselves. It may be that the earliest form of the religious consciousness was Animism, involving a vague belief in the animation of natural objects by spirits resembling human beings. We may prefer to find, with Mr.

Marrett[1] and others a still more primitive stage and to think of Animism itself as issuing from a vague terror and respect for an impersonal power which seems to reside in certain objects and persons. The salient fact which emerges from a consideration of the lowest stage is that religion, in its most indefinite form, consists in the idea of a relation between human beings and some power or influence outside the individual. The supernatural, if it can be said to have any meaning at this stage of religious evolution, involves no conception of anything which could be called deity, nevertheless there is the effort and impulse to come into harmonious relations with a power which is greater than human power, though not necessarily wiser or better.

The upward movement of the religious consciousness is essentially the increase in definiteness and value of the conception of the supernatural.

Thus the carrying out of the anthropomorphic principle, which is of course implicit in Animism itself, is the first great advance in religion. It is the first step towards a worthy idea of the supernatural when the fancy that it may resemble lower forms of power is discarded in favour of the thought that man himself is the analogue of deity. The degrees by which this advance is achieved in the historical religions are many and intricate, but we may usefully distinguish the transition stage between Animism and Polytheism as Polydaemonism. In that form of religion

[1] *The Threshold of Religion.*

the supernatural objects of worship have lost some of their vagueness and have acquired human characteristics. They begin to be denoted by personal names and to have stories recounted of them. The vague belief that processes of nature which are inexplicable to the savage are the result of occult agencies, takes a definite form in nature myths, which are the attempt to find a rational cause of phenomena and to connect them with the supernatural by links which are clear to the imagination. There is no dividing line to be drawn either in idea or fact between Polydaemonism and Polytheism: the latter is simply the logical development of the former. It is an easy and even necessary transition from the view that the supernatural world consists of persons resembling human persons to the further thought that these divine beings possess the attributes of humanity in an idealised form; and that, just as human persons form a society, so there are relations of subordination and authority, of love and hate, of loyalty and treachery between divine persons. Step by step with the progress of humanity in power over nature, social organisation, and moral character the gods advance, and there is no change on earth which is not, sooner or later, reflected in the heavens. But this harmony does not persist, it has within it the seeds of disruption: and we must now go on to notice the most remarkable fact of religious development—the universal and apparently necessary tendency of Polytheism to transcend itself and pass over into some form of Monotheism.

That this tendency is an historical fact can hardly be doubted, though there are many religions which have not succeeded in carrying it out, and it is probably true that no religion has wholly freed itself from polytheistic elements. Yet wherever religion has reached a certain stage of development, we find conceptions which, if worked out and allowed free play, would transform Polytheism into Monotheism. The religion of Egypt, perhaps the chief example of a Polytheism which maintained itself along with a considerable degree of culture and reflection, gives us evidence that monotheistic tendencies were not absent, and in fact Amenophis IV. (*circ.* 1400 B.C.) appears to have succeeded in establishing for a short time the sole worship of Aten, the Sun God. In the Vedas Varuna, Agni, and Indra appear each in turn as supreme; and this monotheism of worship prepared the way for the monistic theology of the Upanishads. In Greece the work of philosophy carried on the monotheistic implications which were already in existence in the conception of a Fate behind the gods. But our object is to discover the causes which led to this development, so widespread and manifesting itself in so many divergent types of polytheism. It is doubtless true that external causes of a political kind have had a determining influence on the form in which Monotheism has been held and have encouraged its prevalence. There is an obvious advantage for a large empire composed of various races and nations that its members should worship one god. But the

universality of the movement towards Monotheism demands an inner cause, a more general explanation. There must be some immanent dialectic which carries the religious consciousness forward to the belief in one God.

The nature of this immanent dialectic will, I think, become plain if we reflect upon the anthropomorphic principle which we have suggested as the mainspring of religious advance up to this point. So long as I am content to regard myself as a mere individual with desires, feelings, and emotions I may, without difficulty, suppose that the unseen world is peopled with numerous beings who are stronger and happier than I, and who may be induced to make me more prosperous. But as soon as I attain a mental development which enables me to reflect upon myself, I shall be conscious that my nature includes principles which transcend my individuality and are in fact universal. Goodness and truth, reason and conscience, though certainly not alien to myself, are super-individual, and I must sooner or later decide what place in the constitution of my nature they occupy. In the light then of the recognition of the values of truth and goodness, the conception of the divine has to be transformed. And, let us observe, this transformation is brought about, not by the abandonment of the anthropomorphic principle, but by its own logic. It is because the nature of man includes elements which have not been fully recognised hitherto that the conception of God must be revised. The polytheistic

view of deity is therefore dissolved by criticism from the moral and intellectual standpoints: but this criticism proceeds on the faith that the divine must satisfy the deepest and most valuable aspirations of man. There is no need to explain in detail how this criticism will work. It is clear that a conception of the world which admits many and possibly antagonistic wills as the ultimate explanation, cannot satisfy the demand of the intellect for unity and coherence. If we call in Olympus to account for the world how shall we account for Olympus? A similar line of thought is implicit in the conception of a universal law of righteousness. The complaint of the moral consciousness against the deities of popular mythology is not primarily that they are immoral, judged by the more enlightened standards of man. A Pantheon composed of gods and goddesses with the morals of churchwardens would fail to satisfy it. The root of the matter is that the moral consciousness is compelled to postulate one universal law of righteousness and this is incompatible with many gods. The only concept of deity which will stand against its criticism is that of one Lord of the whole earth.

Monotheism, then, emerges from Polytheism by reason of the demand of the conscience and the intellect for unity and universality. That there are two lines of criticism, the "practical" and the "theoretical," is important, because it throws light upon a remarkable arrest in the monotheistic develop-

ment which takes place in most of the higher religions. We do not discover in fact that a full Monotheism is achieved. Instead of this the religion of the enlightened becomes a pantheistic philosophy identifying the Divine with the All or with the order of the universe. We shall find the most striking example of this tendency in the religious development of India. As we have already noticed, the Rig Veda gives us a polytheistic religion fully developed and with indications that the transition to Monotheism is already beginning. But the transition is never accomplished. The higher religious thought of India passes on to speculations about the absolute, to a Pantheistic conception of deity, in which the real concept of deity evaporates ; and finally into the nihilism of Buddhism. Polytheism is not transcended in this development : on the contrary, it achieves a new life and a philosophic basis, for there is no real contradiction between a Divine which is identical with the All and the belief in many deities who manifest different aspects of the All. The god of Pantheism cannot be a jealous god, for he has no character. The cause of this divergence to Pantheism is apparently a neglect of the moral considerations which lead away from Polytheism, and an exclusive emphasis on those of a more narrowly philosophical kind. Mr. J. R. Farquhar has drawn attention to a remarkable episode in the history of Indian religion which illustrates this remark. Among the gods of Indo-Iranian religion there is one, Asura Varuna, who had gathered round himself attributes

which contained the promise of a noble ethical theism. He is the source of divine law, including moral law. But the ethical conceptions with which Varuna was associated, the idea of *rita*, are not developed. "Varuna stands out in a lonely grandeur which, to us, has in it something of solemn sadness, for the group of noble conceptions with which he is connected is the one segment of Rig-vedic theology which is not carried forward and used in the great culmination of Indian thought." [1] It would be very far from true to say that no ethical considerations entered into the criticism which Plato and Aristotle directed against popular religion, and it would be hardly more accurate to describe either as the author of a pantheistic theology, yet, in spite of many theistic elements, neither developed a genuine Theism. The Unmoved Mover of Aristotle does not really fill the place of one who can be the source of aspiration and its object, and the timeless realm of Ideas is hardly distinguishable from the order of the universe. That thought so permeated with moral impulses failed to arrive at a conception of God must be attributed to the fact that ethical considerations were in the long run subordinated to purely theoretical. In the last resort it is theoretical knowledge that is regarded as divine, and "true existence is identified with the proper object of logical reason." [2]

If we now turn to the religion of the Hebrews, we

[1] *The Crown of Hinduism*, p. 71.
[2] Dewey, *Influence of Darwin on Philosophy*, pp. 178, 179.

find a process of development towards Monotheism which was almost completely dominated by moral needs. There can be no doubt that the religion of the Hebrews was, in its earliest forms, indistinguishable by any general characteristic from the religion of surrounding tribes. The Old Testament itself contains relics of religious conceptions which are primitive and non-ethical. Jahveh was not, it is evident, for a long period superior to other tribal gods. Modern criticism of the Old Testament has brought out the fact that the passage from the tribal deity to the Holy God of the whole earth was due to the remarkable and unique work of the Prophets. And we must observe that the motive force of the prophetic revolution in religion was ethical. The purely theoretical impulse appears to have played almost no part in the religious development. It is only in the Wisdom literature that speculative questions are raised in any definite manner. In the religious development of the Hebrews, then, we have the outstanding example of a religious evolution which is the complement of that which, in the preceding paragraph, we have traced as culminating in some form of Pantheism. Hebrew religion is the history of the working out of a thoroughgoing ethical Monotheism. The process may be traced in detail from the affirmation by the earliest prophets that Jahveh demands righteousness rather than ritual to the culmination of the conception in the great vision of Deutero-Isaiah of a Universal God who is the source of righteousness and the Judge of

the whole earth. The problems with which Hebrew religious thought grapples are those which arise from the moral aspect of the world, particularly the apparent difficulty of reconciling the facts of daily life and history with belief in a righteous Creator and Ruler of the world. By the year 350 B.C. this ethical Monotheism had been established in all essential particulars; and it is important to notice the difference between the result of this development and the parallel development in Indian religion. So far from the conception of deity having been dissolved in a characterless unity it has become more definite and completely personal. In discarding the cruder anthropomorphic elements in the idea of God the Jewish religion did not deprive Him of all definite attributes. God is spirit, but He is personal spirit. And the typical religious experience is divergent. While in the pantheistic religions the ultimate good for man tends to be thought of as a union with the Absolute Being which is hardly distinguishable from annihilation, in the Hebrew Ethical Monotheistic faith the highest life is that of communion with God, a relation wherein the life of the creature is purified and made more intense. That Hebrew religious conceptions contained elements which needed further elaboration must be admitted, and in particular it is probably true that the idea of the separateness of the Holy God from the imperfect world of creation had been carried to an extreme point, which in the long run was the root of those corruptions of Judaism against which Jesus

protested.[1] Nevertheless, in spite of all reservations, it remains true that Hebrew religion is the supreme and unique example of one type of religious evolution, and that it represents the only line of development which does not end in losing the concept of God altogether in some vague notion of Being or the order of the Universe.

We have reached, by what may appear a long and roundabout journey, a conclusion which seems to me of great value. We have agreed that Christianity must be treated objectively as a part of the general history of the religious consciousness, and we have attempted to find its place in that development. We have, however, seen reason to believe that the movement from Polytheism to a higher form of religion is not a single and uniform one. It branches into two main lines: at the end of one lies non-ethical Pantheism, at the end of the other Ethical Theism. We cannot hope to understand the nature of Christianity unless we approach it from this standpoint. The Gospel presupposes the Ethical Theism of Judaism, and Jesus carries on the prophetic tradition. The fundamental affirmations of Christianity are those which are derived from the prophetic idea of God and His relation with men. The originality of the Gospel does not consist in bringing into the world an entirely new thought of God and an unprecedented experience of man's relation with the Divine. Such an

[1] See, however, on the other side, Montefiore, "The Spirit of Judaism," in *The Beginnings of Christianity*, vol. i.

originality would be a stumbling-block to faith and an obstacle to the acceptance of the message. The originality of the Gospel is not less real. It consists in the fact that in the teaching and person of Jesus, and in the experience of those who were in contact with Him, Ethical Theism for the first time reaches its completion and becomes consistent. In the teaching of Jesus about the nature of God the implications of Hebrew ideas are brought out and made definite.

The idea of God as, before all else, righteous has great difficulty to encounter so long as righteousness is conceived as being conformity to a series of rules which have no inherent connection with one another. We cannot derive the ethical standard from the nature of God unless we suppose the ethical standard itself to be a unity and derived from a single principle. The failure to do this will lead to the thought that the Law is independent and even above God, a thought which is suggested by the Rabbinical fancy that Jehovah himself studies the Law. Jesus' proclamation of the Fatherhood of God, which in the Johannine writings is generalised in the statement that God is Love, carries Ethical Theism at once beyond the practical and theoretical difficulties which seem to arise when we think of God as good. So long as we mean by goodness a system of separate commands, or a collection of isolated virtues, we are involved in hopeless contradictions and may, for example, find ourselves perplexed by such a question as in what sense can

God be said to be courageous? The resolution of goodness, however, into the diverse manifestations of the single principle of love delivers us from such problems and is therefore the completion of the process by which Ethical Theism establishes itself. In the doctrine of the Kingdom of God Jesus takes up that universalistic tendency which we have observed in the greatest of the prophets. The last vestiges of particularism and nationalism, which had persisted from the earlier ages of Hebrew religion, now fall away, and the idea of a society of persons enjoying fellowship with God and with one another takes the place of a society marked off from the rest of humanity by external or accidental privileges.

We should, however, be giving a very imperfect representation of the Christian view if we confined ourselves to the teaching of Jesus as the supreme example of Ethical Monotheism. It is true that for the New Testament no less than for historic Christianity the central point is the person of Jesus. Christianity is Christ rather than the teaching of Christ. There can be no doubt that Jesus made the most exalted claims for himself as the supreme revealer of God, and that this claim was admitted by his followers and formed the basis of their religious life. This at least is clear even if we do not admit that He ever asserted himself to be the Son of God in any unique sense or used the words, "He that hath seen Me hath seen the Father." Only an inconceivably perverse criticism could refuse to admit that in

the earliest records of the Christian religion there is a belief about Christ which at least corresponds to and could form the germ of the Christian doctrine of Incarnation. The question arises in what sense can this valuation of the person of Jesus be attached to the Ethical Theism which we have been urging as the basis of Christianity? Have we not here a departure from the root principle, a religious concept which belongs rather to the ethnic religions than to the moralistic Monotheism of the Hebrews? Such an argument would overlook the real significance of the Christian idea of the dwelling of the divine in humanity. The unique importance of the Christian idea of Incarnation is precisely that it is an idea developed within the bounds of Ethical Monotheism. This fact renders irrelevant the industrious collection of parallels in religions which have a totally different notion of the nature of Deity. It is unfortunately true that Christian Theology has too frequently itself been unwise enough to overlook this, and has treated the relation of Jesus to the Father as a puzzle in ontology rather than a moral fact. But the idea itself is not in contradiction with Ethical Theism. As we have seen, the result of the Hebrew reflection upon the nature of God had a defect which led to grave practical results. In the effort to preserve the Holiness of God free from defilement or compromise, the transcendence and separateness of God was over-emphasised. In the fear of degrading the divine by supposing that "He is even such an one as ourselves,"

there lurks the danger of putting Him so "far above out of our sight" that He becomes an unknown God. It is precisely this danger and defect which are removed by the Christian affirmation of God in Christ. That the supreme and adequate self-revelation of God is a morally perfect human personality is the completion of Ethical Monotheism. It is no excrescence without logical relation to the idea of God as the Ethical End; it is the final stone in the great edifice which has its foundations in the insight of the prophets.

It is interesting to observe that Anthropomorphism here reaches its final triumph and justification. As we have noticed, the anthropomorphic conception of the supernatural is, in primitive religion, the way of progress, and the loftier reaches of religious life are attained by reflection upon the real nature of man and the relative significance of the elements of his nature. So the highest stage of all religion culminates in One Who by being perfect Man manifests to us the Holy God.

We may now sum up the main outlines of the Christian view of the world as our study has brought them out. It is founded upon Ethical Monotheism; and this means that the Source and End of all that is must be thought of as personal. The supreme and fundamental character of this personal God is love. Further, the universe is of such a nature that finite persons may, without loss of individuality, enter into communion with God and that God may adequately reveal Himself by the means of a human life and

character. It will be necessary to draw out a little more in detail the implications of this view of the world, but, before I proceed to do so, I must turn briefly to consider how far this conception of the universe is carried on in Christian history and experience.

II

Let us go back to the passage of Newman which we quoted at the beginning of this lecture. You will remember that he was insisting on the objective character of Christianity and exhorting us to judge its nature by observing its concrete embodiment. By that, of course, he meant that we should listen to the voice of the Church. I propose to accept his view that religion must have some social manifestation, but to suggest an amendment of his deduction from this principle. We shall not perhaps feel so confident as Newman that we are able to distinguish the true Church from the many spurious imitations, and it will be, at any rate, impossible for us here to embark upon a discussion of that question. But there is one social phenomenon which is free from theological perplexities and open to our investigation—Christian civilisation. We shall be consulting more than our convenience if we make it the subject of reflection, for all great religions have formed the nucleus of a type of culture and have worked themselves out in large social movements. I propose, therefore, that we should ask what are the characteristics of Christian civilisation regarded objectively? I believe it will

be found that they can be stated with some precision, and that they can be shown to be based upon a view of the world essentially identical with that which we have discovered to be the Christian view. We shall thus reach a reasonable conviction that Christianity is one : we have not to deal with two or three religions each possessing a different conception of the world : in spite of the variations of theology the main convictions have persisted and have to some extent fulfilled themselves in social life. The " world's witness " to Christianity is to be found in the effects which it has produced in the world.

It is unfortunately only too true that Christian civilisation does not, in one sense, exist. It is easy to represent Christendom as an incoherent mass of warring nations, classes, and principles, inspired by no common purpose and having no definable character. But plausible as such an opinion seems, it would be superficial, for it is certain that Christian civilisation does differ in many remarkable respects from all other types of culture. And at least it may be said that a genuine Christian type of civilisation exists in the same sense and to the same degree as the true self of an individual. My higher self is no permanent and fixed entity complete and definite in time and space, and yet it has a real being and is capable of some kind of description. It exists as an ideal tendency, as a character emerging from confusion, struggling to be born. If we would discover the true self of a man, therefore, we must take him not at one

moment of his life but as a whole, we must observe the general trend of his purposes and the principles which tend to become dominant. Above all, we shall be inviting error if we conceive him as one who has now ceased to grow: we are concerned not only with his past and present but with his probable future. In the same way, if we would understand the significance of Christian civilisation, we must look, so to speak, for its higher self. We must attempt to envisage the ideals implicit in its movement, noting what it constantly, amid cross currents and long aberrations, strives to become.

The most obvious contrast between Christian civilisation and all others is that it is progressive. The illustration of this property which occurs most readily to our minds is the scientific advance which has revolutionised life and thought during the last hundred years; but this is neither the most important nor the most fundamental aspect of the phenomenon. Social organisation and social ideals have shown the same character. Compared with all other civilisations, Christendom has possessed a freedom of adaptation and a forward impulse which is without parallel. Nor is the fact of progress the most important aspect of this differentiating factor. Deeply rooted in the mind of Western civilisation is the idea of progress. The ideal which hovers before its mind is not that of some relatively perfect condition of social life which shall be maintained against peril of change, but rather that of an uninterrupted development which

enlarges its ideal as the successive stages of advance unfold themselves. We are apt to overlook the uniqueness of the idea of progress because it has entered so intimately into the constitution of our minds, so that we are scarcely able to imagine a civilisation in which it does not exercise a like influence. Yet a comparison with the ancient civilisations and with the still existing cultures of China and India is sufficient to establish the fact of the difference on which we have been dwelling. Great as are the debts which we owe to the thought of Greece, the idea of progress is not among them. Let us quote a few words from one who will not be suspected of underrating the Greek legacy to humanity. "That a single principle or will lies at the root of nature, and is also embodied in the mind and actions of man, is the inspiring conviction of every progressive society, as of all science and practical energy. We can hardly realise the depth of the change by which this Christian doctrine initiated the belief in development, so characteristic of the modern world, unless we compare the timid social ideas of the wisest of the Greeks with the audacious metaphors which were the first that occurred to the Galilean peasant. . . . The future is quite differently regarded, not as the painful preservation of equilibrium, but as a free and natural growth towards perfection. . . . For almost the first time in the world's history the golden age is transferred to the future." [1]

[1] Bosanquet, *Civilization of Christendom*, p. 84.

Closely connected with the idea of progress is the second "note" of Christian civilisation which I may perhaps call "enlarging unity." Christian civilisation has exhibited an unexampled power of assimilating various nations and races and, while preserving their individual characters, organising them into some sort of whole. It is true that every civilisation which has been able to survive for any considerable period must have had some unifying power within it; and it is certainly remarkable that this unifying power has been the existence of a common view of life expressed in a common religion. In a wide sense it is true that "the formation of society is due to religion, and the continuity of social existence is conditioned by the continuity of religious beliefs."[1] But though other civilisations have had the faculty of preserving self-identity through a long period and through many changes, not one has approached the capacity which Christendom has shown of integrating an ever more complex material. It will naturally be objected that, whatever may have been the case in mediaeval Christendom, the note of unity has been lost since the tragic errors of the later Middle Ages and the Reformation, and that to-day there is no real unity and no common recognition of moral values. It must be confessed that the will to unity is to be sought rather in the "true self" of Western civilisation than in its actual condition. But that it exists and is preparing for new efforts cannot be doubted.

[1] Chatterton-Hill, *Sociological Value of Christianity*, p. 42.

Even the disruption of the great war was not devoid of indications of the essential unity of Christendom in the fact that none of the great Christian nations was able to stand aloof from the conflict; and the deeper meaning of the catastrophe may be, not that an existing unity has been shattered, but that the Christian world is struggling towards a more complete and more securely founded unity.

A third characteristic of Christian culture is the development within it of the ideals of political freedom and equality. As a conscious movement the battle for freedom has doubtless been associated with a revolt against dogmatic religion; but the rebels themselves have drawn their strength from the same social culture as that against which they protest. It is a fact that Christian civilisation alone has produced the democratic social ideal. A great deal of confusion is caused by the habit of describing some of the slave-states of ancient Greece as democracies; but it is clear that a social system which rests on a class of forced labourers is quite different from what in modern language we mean by democracy. It is, of course, true that perfect democracy has never existed anywhere; but the idea of it has never dawned upon the minds of men except within the sphere of influence of Christianity. It is destined, as every one can see, to be a dominant conception in the future. "The law," St. Paul said, "was a schoolmaster to bring men to Christ, and the Christianity of eighteen

hundred years has been a schoolmaster to bring men to freedom." [1]

Intimately allied, again, with the idea of political freedom is a fourth salient feature of Christian culture, its characteristic type of humanism. Only within Christendom has the idea taken root that human personality as such is worthy of reverence and possesses rights. Compared with this the humanism of the great period of ancient civilisation was narrowly limited and hardly contained the thought of the value of humanity as such. To Plato and Aristotle the slave and barbarian are almost outside the sphere of interest, forming, as it were, an intermediate species between the Greek and the beast. Even Plato's ideal city is a system of castes in which the highest activities, those that are truly and characteristically human, are reserved for a strictly limited few. It is not until the rise of the Stoic philosophy that we come across a belief in the common dignity of all members of the human race. In modern Christendom the humanistic spirit has taken a dominant place in the social conscience. To us it seems obvious that a constant and concerted effort to relieve suffering is a natural function of organised society; but it would not have seemed obvious to the members of any other civilisation. But even more striking than this is the conception of the nature of progress which is inherent in the conscience of modern Christendom. It is no longer possible to put forward an idea of human

[1] Bosanquet, *op. cit.* p. 142.

advance which shall elevate the level of life for a few at the expense of the many or without affecting the condition of any large portion of the human race. The only conception of progress which has the approval of the modern conscience is one which will make the achievements of the human mind, so far as possible, the common property of humanity. This humanistic spirit is far from being exhausted. It is assuming at the present moment new and sometimes questionable forms. But only a shallow insight will see in international movements towards a new social order nothing but a selfish warfare of classes. Along with much that is "all too human," there is in them a deep motive of universalistic humanism, which demands for human beings, simply because they are human beings, a fuller opportunity of sharing in the best and freest life that man is capable of. Humanism then, in a universalistic form, is a characteristic of Christian civilisation, and so far from being exhausted, it is now gathering new force and seeking fresh means of expression.

These, then, seem to me to be the characteristic marks of the higher mind of Christian civilisation. It is progressive and "activist": it possesses a living unity: it has developed the ideal of freedom: it has invented the principle of universalistic humanism. And these are differentiating characteristics. In no other cultural mass are they so persistent. And, further, they are not independent of one another, but are interrelated so closely that we cannot help regarding

them as aspects of a common spirit. Analogies, perhaps, to one or the other of these characteristics may be alleged, but there is no analogy to them as a whole. Christian civilisation remains a unique phenomenon, unique not chiefly in its material achievements and its external conquests but in the ideals which seek realisation in it, in the soul which groans under the imperfections of the body which it has so far attained.

When once we gain a view of our civilisation as one integral movement of the human spirit and seize its salient features, which are too easily obscured by the manifold turns and twists of its historical course, we can hardly resist the impression that it is the working out of a particular view of the nature of the world and of the meaning of life. It is inconceivable that a movement of this nature should have taken place among peoples who had accepted the static and impersonal view of Reality which is the basic creed of Indian Mysticism, or, again, that anything resembling it could issue from a community imbued with the doctrine that God is purely transcendent. The view of the world and of life which is implicit in Christian civilisation is precisely that view which our study of Christianity led us to adopt as its distinguishing feature when we considered it as an episode in the history of religion. The Christian view of the world as we have defined it is a *vera causa* of Christian civilisation. For, consider, if the supreme Reality is a living God, a creative personality,

then the highest activity and the supreme good of man will not lie in quiescence and resignation, but in active co-operation with the creative will. A social embodiment of this idea will therefore be a community which is incessantly active and must have the note of progress. If, moreover, this supreme Reality is conceived under ethical categories and His highest attribute is believed to be love, we have the foundation for a humanism which will be catholic in its scope. Still further, the conception of the Kingdom of God and the idea that God is manifested in a perfect human life will furnish the spring of reverence for human personality and respect for its claims without which freedom cannot survive. If the Christian view of the world is true, the ideal elements in modern civilisation have a firm basis in the structure of the universe. They are more than useful illusions or vague guesses; if, on the other hand, the Christian view of the world must be abandoned, such ideals as freedom and equality would appear to have strangely little rational support. I do not, of course, maintain that the Christian view of the world has been consciously before the mind of every member of Christendom in a definite form, nor do I deny that its features have often been obscured rather than elucidated by the labours of theologians, but I hold that, explicitly or implicitly, vaguely or clearly, this view of the world and of life has guided the evolution of modern civilisation and is at the root of its striving towards more perfect realisation.

III

The task which we set before ourselves in this lecture has, I conceive, now been accomplished. We have drawn out the peculiar world-view which is presupposed in Christianity by tracing its relations with the facts of religious development in general, and we have confirmed our conclusion by reference to the nature of Christianity regarded as a social force acting over the whole period of its existence. But there are two questions which naturally suggest themselves and upon which it may be well to say a few words.

In the first place it may be asked: What is the connection between the fundamental world-view implied in the Christian message and the dogmatic development of the Church? It is at least clear that historical Christianity has asserted much more about the world and about God than those propositions which we have taken to be fundamental. We may justly be challenged to define our position with regard to the Catholic dogmas. Now the answer to this seems to me to be simple in principle, though doubtless not without difficulty in the detailed application. We have not asserted, nor is it a legitimate deduction from our argument, that the primary affirmations which have been stated above are the whole content of the Christian faith. So far from that being the case it is obvious that, in their very nature, they suggest elaboration and development.

They are the framework within which the full meaning of the Christian message must be worked out. They are presuppositions and not a completed system. At the same time, any doctrinal elaboration which obscures or tends to negate these basic beliefs must be dismissed as a perversion rather than a true development. A theological construction which should lead us away from the Heavenly Father and the Kingdom of God and substitute for them an impersonal principle and a mystic ecstasy would be, not an interpretation of Christianity, but a transition to another form of religion.

We may perhaps illustrate the position by referring to the doctrine of the Trinity. It is sometimes held that this is the distinctive feature of the Christian view of God, and therefore that it is one of the elements of the Christian world-view. There is a sense in which this statement is true. I believe that any serious effort to think out the implications of the leading ideas of the Gospel will lead to a Trinitarian doctrine. But it does not seem to be a part of the fundamental presuppositions of Christianity; it is a conclusion to which we may be led if we accept the presuppositions, not one of the presuppositions itself. And, in fact, it would surely be a grave error to suppose that Trinitarianism, as such, would serve as a distinctive mark of Christianity. Conceptions of Deity which approach abstract Trinitarianism are no rarity in the history of religion. They may be found in Babylon, Egypt, and India. What gives the

doctrine of the Trinity its special value and unique character is not the triadic conception of Deity, but the fact that this notion has been worked out within the sphere of the ethical Monotheism of Jesus and has been intended to conserve and make more explicit the ideas of the Fatherhood of God, the revelation of God in Christ, and the Kingdom of God, which are the springs from which all genuine Christian Theology must take its rise.

In the second place, it may be pointed out that if Christianity has a world-view of its own, it has nevertheless made use of pre-existing philosophies for the expression of its belief. What, it may be asked, is the significance of this fact? Are we to regard the alliance of the Gospel with Greek thought as a misalliance? It would be perverse not to recognise that the alliance was inevitable, and absurd to deny the value of the contribution which Greek philosophy made to the working out of Christian conceptions. That a providential concurrence may be traced between the rise of Christianity and the completion of the main development of ancient philosophy is no unfounded belief. "On the whole, the importance of the Hellenic Monotheism as a movement does not lie in the fact that it fulfilled or crowned the old religions, for it killed them; it lies in this, that by dint of lucid thinking it created intellectual forms into which Christianity could pour a new and richer content of its own."[1] It was unavoidable that the new wine

[1] Mackintosh, *The Originality of the Christian Message*, p. 38.

should be poured into old bottles—for there were no others. But the wine has always, sooner or later, burst the bottles, nor have the bottles been without their effect upon the wine. Neither Platonism nor Aristotelianism was, in truth, well adapted for the articulation of a religion whose God was above all ethical and personal. As is well known, the ancient and mediaeval churches passed through the Platonic and the Aristotelian stages. But neither the eternal ideas of Plato nor the purely transcendent God of Aristotle were analogous to the personal and ethical God of the Christian religion. As Professor Clement Webb has pointed out, the Scholastic Theology, as represented specially by St. Thomas, turned to Aristotelianism because it seemed to offer a more secure ground for an ethical conception of God than the immanence which was implied in Platonism.[1] But it was a desperate and hopeless project to substitute the God who "so loved the world" for the Aristotelian God who draws all existence ὡς ἐρώμενον but is himself moved by no impulse of love, without transforming the whole structure of the philosophy. The discrepancy between the Christian view of the world and those of the philosophies which have been used to formulate Christian doctrine is fundamental, and consists in the difference between a static idea of Reality and one which is creative.

I believe that the movements which are now taking place in the philosophical world are full of hope

[1] *Studies in the History of Natural Theology*, p. 242.

for Christian Theology. The concepts of life, activity, and personality are becoming central. It is no longer accepted as an axiom that Reality can have no place for creative action. Just as we argued that Christianity was in this present age groping forward to a social order which would be more consonant with its nature than any that have gone before, so we may see reason to believe that Christianity may be evolving its own philosophy, one that will be based upon the thought of a living and creative God. Thus the call to restate Christian belief is more than a summons to undertake a painful but necessary revision ; it is the challenge to take advantage of a great opportunity.

That an insistence on the fundamental presuppositions of Christianity has practical value needs no argument ; but we may remind ourselves how deeply popular religion has been infected by the static conceptions of Deity which Theology has imbibed from the philosophies in which it has dealt ; so that Christianity is often opposed for not being what it essentially and truly is. Listen to some words of an eloquent and sincere critic. " If a religious view of life and the world is ever to reconquer the thoughts and feelings of free-minded men and women, much that we are accustomed to associate with religion will have to be discarded. The first and greatest change that is required is to establish a morality of initiative, not a morality of submission, a morality of hope rather than fear, of things to be done rather than things to be left undone. It is not the whole duty of man to

slip through the world so as to escape the wrath of God. . . . The religious life that we must seek will be inspired with a vision of what life may be, and will be happy with the joy of creation, living in a large free world of initiative and hope. It will love mankind not for what they are to the outward eye, but for what imagination shows that they have it in them to become. It will not readily condemn, but it will give praise to positive achievement rather than negative sinlessness, to the joy of life, the quick affection, the creative insight, by which the world may grow young and beautiful and filled with vigour."[1] What a depth of misunderstanding, not only and not chiefly in the writer, is revealed when we reflect that these words are written against Christianity!

[1] B. Russell in *Principles of Social Reconstruction.*

LECTURE III

ETHICAL THEISM AS A "LIVE OPTION"

WILLIAM JAMES, in a well-known passage,[1] has pointed out the difference between living and dead hypotheses. When we are in process of making up our minds, when we are holding our assent in suspension, there are certain alternative propositions before us each of which has a claim to be considered true. But these propositions are limited by the circumstances of the case and by our own mental history. There are other possible hypotheses which might be stated in words and, under other conditions, might be worthy of consideration; but in fact they are not considered, they have no actual claim to be true, they are not, at the moment, "live options." The distinction is well founded, and may be applied to the discussion of philosophical systems. At any given time in the history of thought the number of views of the world which compete for assent is limited. Platonism, for example, as a system does not present itself as a living hypothesis to the modern mind. In its detailed working-out it is of purely historical interest, though its spirit is doubtless embodied in contemporary

[1] *The Will to Believe*, p. 3.

thought. The purpose of this lecture is to show that Ethical Theism is a possible hypothesis, a living option: that it deserves to be considered among the interpretations of the world which are actually open to our acceptance. This may seem to err on the side of modesty, but I hope that the course of our discussion will bring out some of the advantages which the Theistic hypothesis possesses over all others and make the hypothesis itself more definite. Nor does the demonstration that Theism is a living option appear to be unnecessary at the present time, for it is a fashion among philosophers of a certain kind to favour Theism with a patronage which is as dangerous as it is unwarrantable, and to imply that the religious attitude towards life is an imperfect attempt at some more coherent and satisfactory view which they themselves have discovered. If we can show that the hypotheses which are put forward as alternatives themselves labour under difficulties which are at least as serious as any which can be alleged against Theism, we shall have removed the illusion that religion has been destroyed by being explained.

The application of the hypothetical method to philosophy will not meet with general approval, and it must be confessed that it is not the method which has been adopted by the classical tradition. The ambition to attain a view of the world which can be presented as necessary truth has captivated the minds of thinkers and has not yet lost its attraction. In spite of frequent philosophical revolutions, in

which the necessary truth of one system has been overthrown by the quite different necessary truth of its supplanter, there are still representatives of the view that philosophy may be treated as a system of propositions which are ultimately self-evident or based on self-evident axioms. Something approaching this opinion is represented by such writers as Dr. Bosanquet, who believe that at whatever point thought may begin its work it will, if it be consistent and thoroughgoing, lead on to their conception of the Absolute. The fact, which is undeniable, that many who have tried to be consistent and thoroughgoing have been led to different conclusions must be explained on the ground that they have failed in their purpose and have misunderstood the implications of experience.

I do not wish to deny that the ambition to establish a philosophy which shall have the authority of irrefragable reason is a noble one, nor even that it may be possible of attainment; but it seems that any one with modesty of mind and a respect for objective fact will be compelled to adopt the hypothetical attitude which I have recommended at least as a starting-point. For the actual state of the philosophical world is one of unexampled confusion of tongues. Most histories of philosophy gain a fallacious simplicity by omitting or slurring over movements of thought which the author does not consider to be important; but up to the time of the break-up of the Hegelian school in Germany the development of thought might be at least plausibly

represented as a comparatively continuous process. By judicious selection the movement of thought might be exhibited as a dialectical process in which one great system prepared the way for its successor. But to-day the movement has burst like a rocket. Doubtless the future historians of philosophy will be able to point to one element among the conflicting systems as the salient and significant one; but to select one philosophy now as the philosophy of the future would be to allow oneself to place an unreasonable reliance upon subjective preferences. Idealism, Pluralism, Logical Atomism, New Realism, Vitalism, all these, in widely variant versions, claim our acceptance. And we should be underrating the seriousness of the situation if we imagined that the dispute concerns simply the solutions which are offered: there is in fact no problem which has ever been debated by philosophy which is not now re-opened; the method and meaning of Metaphysics is one of the chief causes of contention, and we must listen with respectful sympathy but with some depression of spirit to the confession of Mr. Bertrand Russell that "philosophy has made greater claims and achieved fewer results than any other branch of learning," or to the complaint of Professor Dewey that "as philosophers, our disagreements as to conclusions are trivial compared with our disagreements as to problems."[1] I can sympathise with, though I cannot

[1] Russell, *Our Knowledge of the External World*, p. 3; Dewey, *Influence of Darwin in Philosophy*, p. 196.

share, the impatience of some theologians when they are exhorted to adjust the tenets of religion to modern thought, for, if by modern thought we mean modern philosophy, it would be a difficult undertaking to show that any such thing as a definable and coherent doctrine exists. There is no modern philosophy, there are only modern philosophers. We shall be compelled, therefore, to abandon the easy road of defining the deliverances of modern philosophy and must adopt the more painful plan of trying to state what views are actually held by respectable groups of thinkers, and treating them as possible hypotheses.[1]

I am inclined to believe, indeed, that the hypothetical method will increasingly establish itself as the proper approach to philosophical questions, not merely on the ground of expediency but by reason of the nature of the subject. The problem before the mind seems to resemble those which are dealt with by the sciences usually called inductive, and in this sense there is much reason in the demand that philosophy should follow the scientific method. We are confronted with the world as known in experience, the vast array of facts which present themselves to our notice, and we are impelled to find some interpretation of them, some clue which will enable us to think them together as an intelligible whole. The situation is not essentially different from what happens when

[1] Cf. Alexander, *Space, Time, and Deity*, vol. i. pp. 10, 11, for a similar view.

one of the special sciences grapples with a series of facts which are imperfectly understood. The triumphs of science have been gained by the formation of hypotheses and their verification. And let us notice that verification means the adequacy of the hypothesis to cover all the facts. So then with theories about the universe we must surely apply the same test and observe the same caution. A philosophical construction will be verified or no according to its success in interpreting, not one section of the facts of life, but all of them. The Pragmatists have performed a useful work by insisting on the importance of hypothesis and verification throughout the whole field of knowledge, and it is obvious that much that I have said is inspired by their writings. But I wish to guard myself against being supposed to agree with the Pragmatist theory of the nature of truth. I do not believe that truth is identical with verification or that truth is that which "works," except in a special sense of the word. Verification is the sign of the truth of an hypothesis, the *causa cognoscendi* of its truth but not the *causa essendi*. And again it is true that an hypothesis is established when it is found to work, but the word must be understood, not in the sense of fulfilling any personal aims or conforming to wishes of a subjective kind, but simply in the sense of interpreting all the known facts.

The proposal, however, to regard Theism as an hypothesis is open to objection from the opposite

standpoint. It will be felt by some that this is to treat the central truth of religion as one guess among many, and they will ask how by such a proceeding we can justify the assurance which the religious consciousness enjoys of the real existence of the Object of its devotion. It may be replied that the result of our inquiry will be, we hope, to show that the hypothesis of Theism is not "one guess among many" but possesses qualities which will move any considering man to prefer it to all others. But it is, of course, true that the hypothetical method assumes that no strictly demonstrative proof of the existence of God has been produced. In this we part company with an illustrious line of thinkers who are represented by St. Thomas and have the official approval of the Roman Church. According to Thomas, the *praeambula fidei*, the existence and unity of God, are truths of the "natural reason" and are capable of demonstration, while the doctrine of the Trinity is not discoverable by unassisted reason, and, though not contrary to reason, is disclosed by revelation.[1] This opinion has been accepted as the orthodox one in the Roman Church by the *Encyclical* of Leo XIII. in which it is said, "In the first place, this great and glorious fruit is gathered from human reason—namely, that it demonstrates the existence of God."[2]

It would take me too far from my course to discuss with any adequacy the well-worn topic of the tradi-

[1] *Contra Gentiles*, I. 3; *Summa*, I. ii. 2.

[2] See Introduction to *Dominican Translation of the Summa*, vol. i. p. xiii, and Webb, *Studies in the History of Natural Theology*, p. 235.

tional " proofs " of the existence of God, and we may, I think, accept the general view that they are not conclusive. But it does not follow that they are without value, and indeed the tendency in recent philosophy towards a realism which goes behind the Kantian criticism would suggest that some of the objections which have been regarded as fatal will lose their weight. In particular, it seems to me that a view which takes causation to be more than a category by which the mind orders experience and puts it outside the mind as an element of the objective order is bound to come to some terms with the Cosmological argument.[1] Their value, however, may be said to consist chiefly in the statement which they give of avenues by which the hypothesis of God is reached, and, perhaps even more, in their suggestion of the inadequacy of certain alternative hypotheses. Thus the Ontological argument, specially in the form in which it is presented by Descartes,[2] calls our attention to the facts of the religious consciousness and presses upon us the inadequacy of a view which leaves them out of its account; moreover, it suggests the hypothesis that the true interpretation of these facts may be that there is a Real Object corresponding to the religious desires and aspirations. And, further, in the common form, as stated by Anselm and Descartes and criticised by Kant, it fixes our thought on the ideal of the mind that reality

[1] Cf. for a discussion which seems to evade this issue, Alexander's *Space, Time, and Deity*, ii. pp. 343 ff.

[2] Descartes, *Discourse*, Part IV.

should be a coherent and intelligible unity, and suggests the hypothesis that reality does indeed fulfil the expectations which we are impelled to form. The Cosmological argument emphasises the impossibility of any interpretation of the world which would seek its principle within the phenomenal order and suggests the notion of a super-phenomenal Ground. The Teleological argument draws our minds to contemplate certain facts in the world which, at least *prima facie*, seem incompatible with the belief that the Ground of the Universe should be less than intelligent, and therefore leads to the hypothesis of creative mind. I think that Professor Sorley is right when he says that the Theistic arguments as they are usually put have erred by stating the question in the wrong way; starting with the definition of God they have professed to find reasons for believing in His existence. "The problem which confronts us should not be put in the form, Does God exist? but rather in the form, How is the universe to be understood and interpreted?"[1] But when we have stated the question in this form we shall find that the arguments still have value, since they tend to support one kind of hypothesis and to rule out others and to bring out aspects of the world which must receive consideration.

I do not think that the certainty of the reality of God which the intensest kind of religious experience enjoys is at all inconsistent with an absence of formal and logical demonstration. An hypothesis, even

[1] *Moral Values and the Idea of God*, p. 309.

when it has acquired the highest possible degree of probability, is still open, in principle, to alteration and revision in the light of new facts; but it is evident that there are hypotheses which have covered so many phenomena and have survived so many tests that for every purpose they may be regarded as certainly established. And, in practice, it will be found that religion does suppose that belief, even in the most fundamental article of the creed, demands the exercise of faith. This does not at all imply that belief in God is irrational or that it cannot be supported by reasoning. No purpose of religion is served by an enterprise such as that of Mansel's which, in the supposed interests of faith, attempts to deny the competence of reason. Thus religion seems to hold at the same time that faith is necessary yet that belief in God is rational. And further, it is a tenet, not of Christianity alone, that faith is in some sense meritorious, or, if that word be objected to as raising theological controversies, at least that the condition of believing in God is a higher one than that of unbelief. Now the hypothetical way of approach which we have suggested seems to meet all these demands. It enables us to hold that belief is rational, because the hypothesis, as we maintain, can be supported and confirmed by methods which would be recognised as reasonable in the case of any other hypothesis. At the same time it enables us to hold that, even in minds of the greatest insight, assent to the existence of God is never equivalent to that

assent which we give to a proposition which is self-evident or derived by self-evident deduction from indubitable premises, for in our view the rational grounds for belief in God are not of this kind. They are of the same nature as those which we may allege for believing the truth of an hypothesis in the inductive sciences, and the truth of the conclusion, however probable, never escapes from the position of formal uncertainty. Finally, we are able to give an intelligible meaning to the idea that faith in God has merit. The probability of the hypothesis, or rather our recognition of its probability, will depend upon the weight which we give to certain classes of facts among the whole mass which are to be interpreted. If we are content to leave some classes out, or to treat them as of secondary importance, the Theistic hypothesis will lose a great part of its appeal to our intelligence. But, as we shall see, the class of facts which has the most decisive influence in determining a rational choice of Theism is that concerned with values and particularly with moral values. Now to appreciate these facts, to give due weight to them, to reflect upon their implications, demands a disposition and habit of mind which is sensitive to the appeal of goodness and the demands of morality. One who has never been accustomed to regard his conscience or concern himself with the meaning of duty will be little likely to pay attention to these things when he frames his interpretation of the world and of life. He will not attend to them, not because they are not

there or are not facts, but because he is unable to perceive them or at any rate to apprehend them as they really are. Thus, although it is certainly as absurd as it is unjust to accuse all those who do not believe in God of moral obliquity, yet it is true that in very many cases unbelief is due to moral causes, whether to an insensibility to moral considerations or to a slothful indisposition to reflect upon their consequences.

II

We have now to proceed with our review of the interpretations of the world which present themselves to us as "live options"; and it need not be said that we are undertaking a task which would need several volumes for its adequate fulfilment. I will confess in advance that the summary I shall give will be imperfect and consequently unjust, and that it will be necessary to ignore many valuable contributions which the schools of thought we shall mention have made to our understanding of the world. But, if we shall pass over much that could be said in favour of the several hypotheses, it must also be remembered that many criticisms which would find a place in a more elaborate account must be ignored. We shall confine our attention to the general features of each doctrine and to the defects which seem to be inherent in it by reason of its essential nature, defects, that is, which could only be removed by a drastic revision of the whole system. The enterprise is not so desperate

as may at first sight appear. It has been said that the number of stories in the world is strictly limited; but this has not been observed to constitute a check on the productivity of the modern novelist. Though the themes which can be treated are few in number they are capable of endless variety of setting and exposition. So the number of possible interpretations of the world is not infinite. The principles which may be applied as clues to the meaning of the world are few in number, but they may be worked out with indefinite variations and they must be adapted to the knowledge of every age. There is no philosophical conjecture which may not, if it wishes, trace back its spiritual ancestry to the beginning of thought. Thus the history of philosophy is like the history of an aristocracy in which we trace the varying fortunes of a few families and their mutual triumphs and depressions. We are concerned here with their living representatives and observe their ancestry only with a view to assuring ourselves that they are limited in number.

The so-called "classical" tradition deserves our first attention, because, at least in England, it can still boast the greatest names and the most numerous adherents. This is the type of thought which derives, with many modifications, from the thought of Kant and his successors: its chief representatives are Mr. Bradley, Dr. Bosanquet, and Signor Croce. The most satisfactory name for this type of doctrine is Absolute Idealism; it is, however, sometimes

described as "Immanentism" on the ground that it postulates a God or Absolute who is immanent in all existence but not transcendent. This use of the word "immanent" is open to objection, because it may be said that the idea of the immanence of God implies the idea of something other than God in which He is immanent, in fact that immanence apart from transcendence has no meaning. Now it is precisely this other than the Absolute which the theory in question denies. For it is the fundamental tenet of this philosophy that there is only one truly and completely real being — the Absolute. All existent things of whatever kind are appearances, partial and to some extent illusory, of the Absolute, which is held to be all-inclusive and perfect, in the sense that in it all the contradictions which "infect" finite being are resolved and harmonised. It is maintained that, if we take up experience at any point and begin to reflect upon it, we shall be led by a dialectical process to the conception of the Absolute which is, moreover, the real subject of all predication. If we ask further What is the nature of this Absolute? the reply is that it is Spirit; but by this we must not understand personal spirit, because self and person are among the finite existences which disclose their ultimate unreality under criticism. The nature of the Absolute may be defined as timeless experience which transcends relations. We may call it, if we like, "super-personal," because it includes personality and transcends it, but to take personality as an adequate

description would be misleading. A necessary part of this theory is the doctrine of "degrees of reality," which has been developed most clearly by Mr. Bradley, though a more detailed application is to be found in Dr. Bosanquet's *Principle of Individuality and Value.* Whatever may be thought of the claim of finite existence, such as the self, to ultimate reality it cannot be denied that it has reality of some kind. Even though the world as apprehended by common sense may be an illusion, it at least exists as an illusion. It is therefore held that finite existences possess a greater or less degree of reality according to the degree in which they approach the perfection of the Absolute. Thus the self, though not truly real, has a greater degree of reality than a "thing" because, if we may use the expression, the self is more like the Absolute. Finally, it must be noticed that the Absolute cannot be an object of knowledge: and a little reflection will show that this must be the case on any such view. For to know the Absolute it would be necessary for the knower to distinguish himself as knower from the Absolute as object of knowledge: but, since the Absolute is all-inclusive, this attempt must break down, because the Absolute as known would be limited by this distinction and, therefore, not the Absolute. To sum up: on this interpretation of the world there is one truly real being, the Absolute, which is described as Spirit, or, more definitely, as a timeless and non-relational experience. All finite existence is a more or less

adequate manifestation of the Absolute. There can be no existence which is in any sense or in any degree independent of the Absolute, nor, on the other hand, has the Absolute any being apart from the finite beings in whom it is manifested.

This theory has been subjected to a great deal of criticism of a technical kind, and the new school of logicians in particular has attempted to refute what Mr. Russell calls the "malicious" use of the reason. In Mr. Bradley's presentation of the doctrine much turns upon the alleged unintelligibility of relations, and everything the concept of which involves relations is condemned as "appearance." The unintelligibility of relations again is shown by the fact that, when we try to think out what is meant by relation, we become involved in an "indefinite regress." Mathematical Logic, it is said, has now exposed the fallacy of this argument, and therewith has rehabilitated relations. If I were to attempt to follow this line of thought both time and understanding would fail me, and it will perhaps be sufficient to indicate this important criticism with the remark that it has caused great satisfaction to those who are mathematical logicians and considerable bewilderment to those who are not. But our concern is with the difficulties of a more general and obvious kind which are inherent in the hypothesis of Absolute Idealism.

In the first place, I think we may justly complain that the hypothesis is highly ambiguous. We are told that Reality is spiritual and, at the same time,

are warned that we must not suppose it to be personal. Now we may surely urge that words should be used with a definite meaning, and that meaning must be derived from our own experience. Spirit, so far as we know, has no meaning except as a description of centres of experience of a high type. That there can be such a thing as experience without a centre is an assumption for which there is no ground. At least it may be contended that the use of the words "spirit" and "experience" give an illusory appearance of definiteness to the hypothesis, because what is meant is really something quite different from what we mean by spirit and experience, while the words cause us unconsciously to suppose that the Absolute is analogous to them. At any rate it will be admitted that the Absolute is indefinitely different from any experience I may have, and from any concept of experience which, as a result of my own, I may form. But if the Absolute is indefinitely different we are clearly quite unable, in any intelligible sense, to know what the Absolute is. I do not say that we are brought back to a position of complete Agnosticism, but we are only saved from that fate by the doctrine of degrees of Reality which assures us that some forms of existence are nearer true Reality than others.

We have seen, therefore, that the doctrine of degrees of Reality is a necessary part of the hypothesis which we are considering, because it cannot be questioned that finite existence has some kind of real being, while without the doctrine the hypothesis

would be indistinguishable from an Agnosticism such as that professed by Herbert Spencer. It must be recognised that the conception of degrees of reality has an element of truth. It is a part of our own contention that some aspects of the world are more significant than others, that they are, in fact, better clues to the meaning of the whole; but it is surely a misuse of words to designate this greater significance as greater reality. One form of reality may be more inclusive, more perfect, than others, but it is not, therefore, more real. "It is only that there is more *to* the reality or truth in one case than the other; a wider range or richer contents in one case than the other. The doctrine of degrees of truth or reality rests on the belief that finites lose their value or at least alter it by being taken along with others."[1] And, in particular, I must needs doubt whether it is possible to form the conception of a type of existence in any strict sense of the words, more real than my own self and its experience which must ultimately be the criterion of reality and the source of the concept itself. That I am real I cannot doubt, nor, if I am sane, shall I deny that there are real beings who have a richer content and a wider range than I: but those beings are not more real, however greatly they may surpass me in value and potency.

But there is a deeper objection to this hypothesis than any which arises from the working out of its

[1] Alexander, *Space, Time, and Deity*, ii. p. 265.

details. The fatal flaw is that it does not really provide us with an interpretation of the world at all. It does not answer the question which we actually wish to have answered. The world of experience is not explained, but is explained away. As we know it, the world is a scene of change in which selves are striving to realise purposes, in which history is being enacted and real issues are being decided. And we are conscious that it is only at our peril that we can let slip our grasp upon this fact. We ask for an insight which will make clear to us the meaning of this strange and apparently confused scene. The answer of Absolute Idealism, when it is consistent with itself, is that all these facts which seem so indubitably real that they are the texture and essence of our lives are but misleading appearances of a timeless and all-inclusive Absolute. In the last analysis there is no real change and no unfulfilled purpose: selves are but illusory reflections of the impersonal Reality. The world of experience is dissolved and "absorbed" into a reality which has no feature in common with it. Now I do not deny that this hypothesis might be an interpretation of the world on one condition. Contrary as it is to all the *prima facie* phenomena of life it might really be true that the truest insight consisted in understanding that the Absolute is the sole Reality and that the world of becoming is an illusory appearance. I say on one condition—that some account should be given of why the Absolute has appearances. But this is a

question which Absolute Idealists not only refuse to answer but stigmatise as unmeaning. We shall incur the reproach of never having grasped the purpose of philosophy if we insist on putting it. We can understand the reluctance to answer this question, because the hypothesis has rendered any answer impossible. It is quite inconceivable that any reasonable account should be forthcoming of why the timeless and complete Absolute should have appearances and should be manifested in the realm of change and purpose. There is a χωρισμός in this philosophy as definite as that with which Aristotle reproached Plato. The world of our life cannot be attributed to any impulse of love or creation or the fulfilment of purpose, since all these are transcended and abolished in the Absolute. But I at least must refuse to admit that the question is either unmeaning or unimportant. On the contrary, it is the very question which we are concerned to have answered. Why do selves and their purposes and experiences exist? If it is answered they do not really exist I must still ask why do they appear to exist? and an hypothesis which has no answer, which by its very principle can have no answer, has no claim to have solved the mystery of the world.

The title of Naturalism to be called a "live option" is open to dispute, for the trend of thought has been on the whole to discredit those once formidable theories which occupied so large a place in the mind of the nineteenth century. If we may misquote a phrase of Hume's we may describe Naturalism as a

"polite materialism." The principle of all hypotheses which may be described as Naturalistic is that of taking the lower elements in the universe as the most significant, as truly real, and attempting to give some account of the higher elements, such as consciousness, in terms of these supposed more elementary factors. The older type of naturalism has been drastically criticised by Professor James Ward in his *Naturalism and Agnosticism*, and Mr. Balfour's *Gifford Lectures* may perhaps be accepted as a sufficient epitaph. The tendency which was represented, however, by Huxley and the Synthetic Philosophy and by Haeckel may be found seeking new embodiment in those writers who, under the name of New Realism or Logical Atomism, are proclaiming the need for the application of the scientific method in philosophy. Where this line of thought will ultimately lead is not clear, because the thinkers who have adopted it have not yet approached the fundamental problems of philosophy. In the hands of Mr. Russell, the theory appears to lead to a form of Agnosticism which renounces the ambition to answer any of the questions which, as human beings, we are most eager to have answered. "Philosophy does not offer or attempt to offer a solution of the problem of human destiny, or of the destiny of the universe."[1] A comparison of this utterance with the great essay *A Free Man's Worship* and other passages shows quite clearly that Mr. Russell intends to include

[1] *Our Knowledge of the External World*, p. 18.

in this act of renunciation all endeavours to grasp the significance of the Universe as a whole. But the new Agnosticism in one respect seems to be inferior to the old, for, so far as I am aware, Mr. Russell has not given us any reasons, even bad reasons, for supposing that the problems which philosophy has hitherto set before itself are insoluble.

Professor Alexander's precise relations to Mr. Russell are a subject with which it would be difficult to deal, but it may be assumed that in general principle they are at one. In his recent *Gifford Lectures*, Professor Alexander has made a striking and impressive statement of the application of the realistic position to all levels of experience. We should observe that he puts his exposition forward as a hypothesis and that he relies upon its success in giving coherence to our view of the world for the establishment of its truth.[1] Into the details of this highly complex hypothesis it is impossible to enter: but the general idea is simple. Starting with the assumption that space and time are not relations nor in any sense dependent upon mind, the Professor regards the entity Space-Time as the "matrix" of all existence. "Space-Time is not a mere thought but really a stuff."[2] It is a primordial entity out of which matter, life, mind, and ultimately Deity are evolved by the growing complexity of its organisation. That something like this is the picture which physical

[1] *Space, Time, and Deity*, I. Chap. I.
[2] *Op. cit.* ii. p. 115.

science gives us of the course of world development may perhaps be granted, but we may respectfully doubt whether such a descriptive effort can be said to answer any of the questions of philosophy. No one really questions that, when the organisation of matter reaches a certain degree of complexity, life appears and again that organic complexity of a certain kind is accompanied by consciousness, though the terms in which this transition should be described may be open to dispute. Nor is there any reason for objecting in principle to the extension of this descriptive method downwards below the level of the material world. But what, after all, does this hypothesis explain? To refund the problems of the universe into some "neutral stuff" is no new shift in philosophy, nor is its history one which should lead us to entertain great hope of its success. That matter contains "the promise and potency of all life" has not in the long run been found to be an illuminating remark, and there is no reason to suppose that it will be made more fruitful by the substitution of Space-Time.

In spite, therefore, of the great originality and acuteness of Professor Alexander's discussion it does not seem that he has evaded the persistent dilemma which dogs all theories of the naturalistic kind. On the one hand, if they are consistent they are committed to the desperate attempt to show that life and mind are really identical with, and may be resolved into, complex convolutions of some "stuff" which is

not living and not mental. On the other hand, they may prefer to sacrifice consistency to plausibility and surreptitiously beg the question by endowing their primordial and simple "stuff" with the "potentiality" of the higher phases of existence. In either case we have an hypothesis which will not bear investigation: for in the first form it is refuted by the facts of experience and is, in truth, unmeaning: while in the second form it contradicts itself and, under criticism, turns into a totally different hypothesis.[1]

The views which we have been discussing hitherto have been inspired in various ways and with widely divergent results by logical motives: but we have now to consider two hypotheses which derive their inspiration chiefly from biological considerations. Vitalism in philosophy has become a "live option" simultaneously with the revival of vitalism in biological science represented by Professor Driesch and others. The writings of Professor Bergson and of his brilliant English exponent and interpreter Professor Wildon Carr are the sources from which we may derive an understanding of this hypothesis in its most thoroughgoing form. Bergson, it must be remembered, explicitly disclaims the possession of a complete system and would estimate his own contribution to thought as the discovery of a new method in philosophy which is capable of indefinite application

[1] I should be inclined to say that the latter form is the one which Professor Alexander really adopts and to suggest that Space-Time will turn out to be the name which he gives to God as Creator while he reserves Deity for God "manifest in the flesh."

rather than as a fully-rounded body of truth. In this he differs from the two thinkers, Fichte and Schopenhauer, with whom he has much in common, and we must beware of attributing to him opinions upon subjects with which he has not dealt, however obvious it may be to us that these opinions would follow from his principles. I think indeed that, as M. Le Roy has argued, the consideration of the problems of value would lead to the modification of the hypothesis in a definitely Theistic direction.

From our point of view the most important aspect of Bergson's thought is its extreme reaction from the doctrine that Reality is static and that change and movement are misleading appearances. On the contrary, in Bergson's opinion, change and movement are the essence of Reality. *Durée*, real duration, as distinct from conceptual time, is the stuff of the world, a free movement which is continuously and unendingly creative. But this movement, which appears in us as consciousness, is beyond the apprehension of the intellect. Intelligence is adapted to dealing with space, and, by its very nature, in conceptualising reality, robs it of its essential character, turning what is pure movement into the static, quantitative, and mechanical. It therefore follows that Reality can only be approached by a kind of intuition. We may apprehend the cosmic *élan* by an effort of intuition which is quite other than an effort of the intellect. It is not necessary here to describe the well-known conception of creative evolution by which Bergson

represents for us the meaning of the cosmic movement as the endeavour of the life force to attain the maximum amount of freedom. The conception involves a complete rejection of all mechanistic theories of evolution and also of "radical finalism" in the sense that all is foreordained or foreseen. It will be sufficient to point out some of the unsolved problems that remain as indications that the hypothesis will need extension and modification before it can be accepted as adequate.

The extreme anti-intellectualism which Bergson has adopted has of course been a point of attack, and it is not easy to see why the intelligence should be confined to dealing with spatial existence. The resort to intuition only as the source of our acquaintance with reality would appear to leave no place, in the last resort, for philosophy at all, and, in fact, to confine it to a catalogue of the deliverances of those who have, or profess to have, enjoyed the experience of contact with the life movement. But if we may leave this point as raising questions of too vast a scope, which, moreover, have been already touched upon, we may notice some *lacunae* in the theory itself as a cosmological hypothesis. One of the most impenetrable parts of Bergson's philosophy is his account of the nature of the material and spatial world. In his earlier writings he seemed to suggest a cleavage in reality, a dualism between the external world of immobility and the internal world of movement. Had such a dualistic conception been the final

outcome of his thought we should have had a clear indication of the inadequacy of the hypothesis, for an unresolved and ultimate dualism is a confession that the effort to understand the world has failed. But in his later writings Bergson has striven to transcend this dualism and to regard the external and material as itself created by that movement which is the only reality. Thus the hypothesis tends to pass from dualism to a kind of monism. Matter is represented as a movement opposed to the evolution of spirit, a movement towards pure spatiality. It may be doubted whether this expedient has done anything to relieve the difficulty. A dualism of movements is not more satisfactory than a dualism of substances, and we are left without any help to answer the question, which must surely arise, How do these divergent movements originate? "The difficulty is to account for the origin of this limiting matter. Bergson argues that it is but the inversion of the free activity of supra-personal spirit, and that intelligent personality has appeared in the course of the effort of the spiritual power to reassert itself, and overcome the interruption which it has encountered. But the supreme difficulty is to account for the primary interruption. Why should the free activity ever have become inverted? Fichte argued from the fundamental nature of the transcendental 'I' to the necessity of the production of a limiting objective world, but even that line of argument is not open to Bergson, and it will have to be considered

whether this thought, when stripped of its metaphorical garb, is not seen, at this point, to present insuperable difficulties."[1]

I shall only refer to one other problem which seems to need further elucidation by Bergson: the relation of the finite self to the general movement of reality. My purpose is simply to point out that this question has not been cleared up, and, in fact, there is more than one interpretation possible of Bergson's view on this matter. It is clear that, in his opinion, activity is more fundamental than consciousness, and that the *élan* is not in any sense personal. It might therefore be held that the evolution of finite persons is a stage in the development of the life impulse. They are one means, and the most effective means, by which the drive towards freedom realises itself: and, if this is so, we should not have any ground for believing that individual selves were more than temporary and evanescent incarnations of the cosmic movement. They would be ripples on the surface of that mighty stream. Such a view, it seems to me, is really most in accordance with Bergson's main line of thought. But, on the other hand, there are passages, such as the conclusion of the great chapter "De la signification de la vie,"[2] in which he seems to contemplate the possibility of personal immortality, and therefore to imply a much greater significance for finite personality in the constitution of the universe.

[1] J. M'Kellar Stewart, *Critical Exposition of Bergson's Philosophy*, p. 117.
[2] *L'Évolution créatrice*, 7th ed., pp. 202 ff.

These remarks are not intended as a refutation or even as a drastic criticism of the point of view which Bergson's genius has articulated with such intellectual subtlety and expressed with such unequalled power. It will be found, I believe, that he has inaugurated a new era in philosophy, and that he has much to teach us which will be vitally important in Theology and the Philosophy of Religion. He has opened the way to recapture the thought of the Living God and the Creative Spirit. But much remains to be done. The suggestions which he has made need to be thought out and co-ordinated with the religious view of the world; and I conceive that the patent incompleteness of his theory, which will become even more apparent when, in our next lecture, we examine the implications of the moral life, is a warning against taking his hypothesis as it stands as a final solution.

Mr. Bradley's prediction in *Appearance and Reality* that Pluralism would increase in influence has been abundantly fulfilled, and it must probably be admitted that the further addition to the prediction that "it will add to our confusion" has not been without justification. Pluralism is a theory which appears in very different forms, and it will be necessary to confine ourselves to the most general consideration of its principles: even so, the remarks which we shall make will not apply to that type of Pluralism which Dr. M'Taggart has deduced from Hegel. Modern Pluralism in its most influential forms derives a great deal

from the philosophy of Leibniz, and its motive is not greatly different from his. Just as he, in opposition to the Cartesian and Spinozistic doctrine of universal Substance, emphasised the genuine diversity of the world, so modern Pluralism is specially a protest on behalf of freedom and individuality against theories, whether of Absolute Idealism or Naturalism, which would dissolve the finite individual into the Absolute or into a mechanistic order of the universe. The pluralistic hypothesis is, in essence, simply that finite individuals are the sole reality. "Reality comprises selves (*i.e.* active subjects of experience) alone, differing simply in degree or kind of mental development, though the diversity is indefinitely various. Experience, then, consists in action and reaction between self and other selves, described by Professor Ward in the expressive phrase *mutuum commercium.*"[1] It is important to observe that Pluralism is really a monistic hypothesis, in the sense that it maintains that reality is of one kind throughout and that kind is spiritual. It is opposed to Dualism because it holds a "qualitative sameness in everything that is real," but it is opposed to "Singularism" because it regards this spiritual reality as consisting of individuals analogous to human persons.[2] The material environment is to be conceived as consisting of monads at a lower stage of development and not as different in kind.

[1] Richardson, *Spiritual Pluralism*, p. 9.
[2] Ward, *Realm of Ends*, p. 24.

This, in the barest outline, is the pluralistic hypothesis. We may proceed to notice some of the advantages which are alleged on its behalf. In the first place, we must confess that, whatever may be the difficulties in the final working out, it starts from the right point. There is one, and perhaps only one, indubitable fact about the universe: that it appears in centres of experience. I know that I am a centre of experience and I cannot really doubt that other similar centres exist. Further, I cannot in practice question that I am a centre of activity, and that other centres like me exist. It is therefore a just claim that Pluralism starts to build up the world with real units: it begins with concrete realities and not with abstractions. Secondly, it is not impelled by its first principles to treat movement and change as a scandal or an illusion. Taking active monads as the very stuff of reality it can give a genuine meaning to historical development. The "changes and chances of this mortal life" are more than an illusory appearance of an unmoved Absolute: they are really momentous and contain vital issues. Nor, thirdly, is Pluralism devoid of some plausible account of the progressive evolution of the world. It may conceive of a consummation towards which the whole of the monads are striving by thinking of the secular movement as a growing integration of the units of which it is composed, an integration which will eventually lead to a harmonious co-operation between the elements of reality not unworthy of the name of the Kingdom of God.

But, in spite of these real advantages, Pluralism cannot stand as the final view of the world. As a cosmological hypothesis, apart from the question of its attitude towards moral values, it is imperfect and manifestly defective. We will pass over the criticism which has been made upon the conception of the external world as a society of selves and confine ourselves to those defects which are inherent in the hypothesis itself. And, first, the possibility of interaction between the monads appears to be both a necessary assumption and an impossible conception for this theory. Pluralism in the form in which Leibniz supported it escaped the dilemma by denying the fact. For him interaction was appearance and not reality. The monads developed independently of each other and their apparent co-ordination was the result of a "pre-established harmony." This expedient has not commended itself to modern Pluralism; and it is left with the task of showing how, without the violation of the complete and indefeasible distinctness of the monads, their *mutuum commercium* is possible. It is evident that here we are on the brink of the passage to Theism. The problem would be solved if it were held that there was one Being in whom all other monads "lived and moved," but it would be solved at the expense of thoroughgoing Pluralism. Secondly, it is clear that, even allowing the possibility of interaction between the monads, the hypothesis does not give a complete answer to the cosmological problem.

Let us think of the beginning of the world-process as conceived by Pluralism. We may assume that there is an indefinite number of monads in juxtaposition at an unimaginably low stage of development, of inconceivable simplicity. But this simplicity cannot be absolute. The pluralistic hypothesis of cosmic evolution will not work at all unless we are able to postulate that each monad strives in its own manner for self-expression. Now this implies that each has an original character, a nature which individuates it and distinguishes it from all other monads. Thus the monads can never be absolutely simple and characterless; they can never be *mere* centres of experience and activity. But the possession of this original nature cannot be explained by Pluralism. We are once again driven by the working out of the pluralistic hypothesis to supplement it by another, for if we remain within the limits of Pluralism we shall be in the contradictory position of having to postulate creation and at the same time to postulate that there is no Creator. Thirdly, a thoroughgoing Pluralism will have great difficulties with the theory of knowledge and the notion of an absolute truth. A theory which exploits the manifoldness and spontaneity of the finite elements of being to the extent of denying their systematic unity, which thinks of them as "strung-along" and not in coherent and definite relations, has cut away from itself the presupposition on which knowledge rests. To quote one who has considerable sympathy with the plural-

istic hypothesis: "Every thought, every attempt, not only to know, but to formulate an hypothesis, a doubt, even a negation, implies the idea of Being. *Vice versa*, he who thinks Being, has knowledge, although he knows no particular being. He thinks, he knows, not an abstract unity, but the unity of things—that character of them in which the reality of their being consists."[1]

III

We must now attempt to gather up the results of our survey of hypotheses which are not definitely theistic. Summary and imperfect as it has necessarily been, it has, I hope, led to some valuable conclusions. We have confined our attention to the pretensions of each to be a satisfactory cosmological theory, and have completely omitted all reference to the subject of values, except in so far as some allusion to them was forced upon us by the nature of the hypothesis under examination. We have found that no hypothesis was without serious difficulties, difficulties which arose not from the particular presentation of it found in the writings of an individual thinker but inherent in the main principles of the hypothesis itself. But we have done more than this; for we have found some reasons for believing that at least two of the hypotheses, Vitalism and Pluralism, when thought out a little further, would converge

[1] Varisco, *Know Thyself*, p. 128.

towards Theism. All that remains to be done is to vindicate the position of Theism as a "live option" by setting it in relation with the alternatives and drawing out its advantages over its rivals.

Theism agrees with Absolute Idealism that reality is spiritual, but it rejects the idea that spirit can mean anything but personal spirit. With Pluralism it affirms the real existence of finite spirits and centres of experience, and claims for them some genuine independence and freedom. But it differs from Pluralism by holding that this independence and freedom are not absolute. Finite centres have their being within the ambit of a Supreme Being. Though they are not identical with God, they are not completely independent of Him. They are living units within a living system, the general features of which are determined by a Supreme Will. Holding fast to the belief that spirit cannot be less than personal, Theism refuses to take any single aspect of finite spirit as the sole or only ultimately real characteristic of the Supreme Spirit. It cannot think of God as mere intelligence or mere feeling, but is impelled to find in Deity all the elements, though in an indefinitely heightened form, which we discern in the most complete personal life which we know. It is therefore in accordance with Vitalism in thinking of God as essentially active and creative, nor can it suppose that this activity is one of mere contemplation, a *νόησις νοήσεως*. But, by the same principle, it rejects the narrow view of the place of intelligence in

reality which has become associated with Vitalism. Its God is living and creative, but He is no bare life impulse or cosmic energy, creating blindly in a purposeless striving towards some unforeseen end. In Him all the elements of spirit which we abstract from one another and which in our finite persons do really tend to fall apart, are fused into a perfect and indissoluble unity, so that God is Will, Reason, and Emotion not partially or by turns, but Intellective Will and Loving Reason perfectly and eternally.

It cannot be questioned, I think, by any candid thinker that Theism has several definite advantages as a cosmological hypothesis over any other. But I must dwell particularly upon one advantage which sometimes escapes notice. It is the only hypothesis which even professes to have an answer to what I must needs think is the problem which we most desire to solve: Why does the world as we experience it exist, and what is its significance and the meaning of life? That, as I suppose, is a question which is devoid neither of import nor of importance. It is in fact, as I believe, the mainspring of all philosophical inquiry. But, as we have seen, no hypothesis other than Theism has any answer to give, while in most cases the impotence is confessed or disguised under a denial that the question has any relevance. Theism has an answer. The world exists because it was created by the love of God. Its purpose is to educate and fashion finite spirits, through free effort, into the status of children of God; to

bring them to a condition of intellectual and moral development such that they may enjoy that complete communion with God which is the consummation of their being, and may form that community which, by the harmony of the selves with one another and with their Creator, constitutes the Kingdom of God. It may be urged that the hypothesis has inherent contradictions or that it is refuted by the facts of life: but it cannot be argued that it is no answer to the problem. And we have been led to see that it is the only answer. There is no alternative hypothesis which will meet our needs. If Theism must be rejected we shall be compelled to confess that our fundamental impulse must remain unsatisfied, and, though we may learn much that is interesting about the structure of the universe, our profoundest question why a universe such as ours should exist at all must remain an insoluble enigma.

The remaining claims of Theism on our attention as a "live option" have perhaps been sufficiently indicated in the earlier part of this lecture, and I may content myself here with calling them to your remembrance. Theism, while preserving the true insight of Pluralism into the importance of the finite self, evades the difficulties which arise from the fact of intercourse and the implications of knowledge. It may allege on its own behalf that it alone gives due weight to the two aspects of the world which are emphasised respectively by Absolute Idealism and Pluralism: on the one hand, it does not interpret

unity in such a manner as to deprive the multiplicity of existence of all meaning; nor, on the other hand, does it, in the interests of multiplicity, destroy the unity of the whole.

I am, however, very far from asserting that the theistic hypothesis has no difficulties of its own, though I believe that even from the standpoint of this lecture they are less serious than those which attach to its alternatives. I do not refer to the problem of evil, which is sometimes said to be the crux of the theistic hypothesis, for it does not seem to me to be true that evil is any more inexplicable from the theistic point of view than from any other. The real objection which has to be met might be put as follows: "Theism may indeed seem plausible and even the only satisfactory view so long as it is stated in vague and general terms. It appears as a kind of *via media* between the extremes of Singularism and Pluralism with that show of moderation and reasonableness which compromises usually possess. But it is nothing more than a compromise: its pretence to reconcile unity and multiplicity is simply verbal. With all their defects, their aloofness from the facts of life, their unsolved problems, Singularism and Pluralism are self-consistent theories. But attempt to think out the theistic theory, analyse your concept of a personal God, and your presumption of finite selves with relative independence, and you will find that your compromise begins to break up. Either you are forced to sacrifice the reality of the

creature to preserve your affirmation of God, or your conception of Deity becomes degraded to that of one monad among many, a *primus inter pares*, and God is lost in the world. The theistic hypothesis is an eclectic juxtaposition of mutually incompatible elements. Think it out, and you will be led to embrace either one or the other of the propositions which you have forced into an unnatural union."

There is much weight in this objection, and we are bound to consider more carefully the meaning of divine Personality and of Creation if we are to be able to assert that Theism is a self-consistent hypothesis. But before we proceed to that business we must first consider the support which is given to Theism by that element in the world which we have so far left out of account—the existence of values.

LECTURE IV

THE MORAL ARGUMENT FOR THEISM

In our last lecture we vindicated the claim of Theism to be considered as at least a possible hypothesis, and we found some reason for holding it in many respects superior to others which have been put forward. In that argument we omitted all consideration of values. We must now take up this omitted factor in the problem and regard the world as a sphere in which values are developed and enjoyed. The argument which we shall pursue will be the same as that of the preceding lecture. We shall observe the phenomena of the moral universe and shall ask which of the hypotheses which are "live options" for us covers the facts most adequately? It will appear as a result of our inquiry that the dialectic which in the evolution of religion led under ethical impulses from Polytheism to Monotheism was not mistaken; the individual mind, if it will retrace the steps of the religious consciousness in its passage to ethical Monotheism, will reach the same conclusion. It will be necessary, if we are to compress the argument into anything like reasonable limits, to pass over much

that is interesting in the history of the Moral Argument and to say nothing on many points which would fall in our way if we had opportunity for a full treatment of the subject. This is the less to be regretted because Professor Sorley has recently considered the whole question at length in his valuable book *Moral Values and the Idea of God.*

There is one further limitation which must be imposed. We shall confine ourselves to moral values; but it need not be said that we do not forget the existence of other kinds of value, nor do we mean to imply that they have no importance, or that a hypothesis which ignores them can be justly accepted as satisfactory. There are aesthetic values as well as moral, that which is beautiful has intrinsic worth as much as that which is ethically good. And these two types of value, though distinguishable, cannot be utterly distinct from one another, for we can attach a real significance to the description of a character or a life as beautiful, discerning in its harmony and proportion the same feature as that which is inseparable from the value of a work of art. We should again judge it to be a moral duty to promote the existence of beauty in the world, though not a duty under all circumstances or for all people. Those types of character which have pursued one kind of value to the exclusion of the other are defective, and we should hesitate to give our unmixed admiration either to the puritan or the aesthete. There is no cleavage in the realm of values. Beauty and good-

ness are intimately connected as part of one whole. Though we shall speak, therefore, for purposes of convenience chiefly of moral values, we would not be taken to regard them as separable from aesthetic values, and it will be evident that a great part of the argument which follows will apply to beauty as well as goodness, since aesthetic judgements no less than moral judgements imply a norm, the Absolute Goodness and Beauty.

It is convenient to distinguish three possible methods of dealing with the data of morals: the historical, the psychological, and the distinctively ethical. In pursuing the first we are engaged in the attempt to trace the rise and evolution of the moral ideas; in the second we seek to analyse the moral consciousness as it exists in individual experience; in the third we strive to formulate the supreme moral law or to define the nature of the Absolute Good. It would be false to assume that these three lines of investigation are completely independent of one another, since it would be strange if the development of moral conceptions should throw no light upon the nature of the moral ideal, or again if our view on the central problem of ethics did not affect our treatment of the moral consciousness of the individual. But, though not independent, they are distinct. They propose different questions and pursue different methods.

In each of these inquiries we may, if we choose, stop short with the answer to the immediate problem

which lies before us. We may be content to give a description of the variation and development of moral ideas, with an analysis of the conscience, with a statement of that conception of the Ultimate Good which commends itself to us. But if we do stop short it will be by an act of arbitrary choice and not because no further question suggests itself. In each case we are naturally led on to another investigation. When we have traced the moral evolution of mankind we may ask, What information may we derive from it concerning the nature of the universe of which it forms a part? When we have analysed the conscience we may ask, On what grounds can we justify that sense of obligation which is the characteristic property of moral experience? When we have defined the nature of the Good we may ask, What is the place of the Good in the general structure of the universe? It will be found, as I believe, that in each case the consideration of the questions thus indicated will lead to a theistic hypothesis. It would be too much to maintain that the facts of morality furnish us with premisses from which we can, by a necessary argument, deduce the existence of God; but we may reasonably hold that they afford a cumulative argument by which His existence may be established with a high degree of probability.

Clearly, however, the value of any such argument must depend upon the weight which we allow to the moral aspect of our experience. And we must notice that it is urged by some thinkers that moral values

have no claim to be considered in deciding philosophical problems. Mr. Russell, for example, tells us that the cause of philosophy's inconclusiveness is that it has not maintained "ethical neutrality." "Men have remembered their wishes, and have judged philosophies in relation to their wishes. Driven from the particular sciences, the belief that the notions of good and evil must afford a key to the understanding of the world has sought a refuge in philosophy. But even from this last refuge, if philosophy is not to remain a set of pleasing dreams, this belief must be driven forth. It is a commonplace that happiness is not best achieved by those who seek it directly; and it would seem that the same is true of the good. In thought, at any rate, those who forget good and evil and seek only to know the facts are more likely to achieve good than those who view the world through the distorting medium of their own desires."[1] This remarkable utterance appears to confuse two quite different things. We shall agree that it would be a futile kind of thinking which was dominated and distorted by subjective and personal ambitions, and it is the beginning of wisdom to understand that the universe was not contrived for our peculiar convenience. It is indeed necessary that we should seek to know the facts. But it would be a strange inference from this commonplace of philosophical exhortation to deduce that there is a certain type of fact which it is our duty to ignore. What, we may

[1] *Mysticism and Logic*, pp. 30, 31.

ask, does Mr. Russell mean by "a fact"? and by what authority does he confine the word to phenomena other than moral? If it is a "fact" that the universe is of such a nature that in it minds perceive objects and observe uniformities, it is equally a "fact" that in it minds form ideals and acknowledge themselves to be under moral obligation. And this latter fact is as much a part of the world, a character of reality, a significant element in the system of Being, as any other. A philosophy which refuses to take it into account, which shuts its eyes to it for fear of being biassed, has already fallen into the snare which it seeks to avoid, and in its reverence for facts has determined not to notice some of the most remarkable features of the world.

But it is, of course, true that a great tradition in philosophy has gone further than this and has, in Mr. Russell's words, believed "that the notions of good and evil must afford a key to the understanding of the world." The motive of this belief is obvious: it lies in the fact that only on the assumption that the Good is the master principle of being can we regard the world as completely rational. The Platonic philosophy illustrates for us the natural tendency to find the only final explanation in the idea of the Good. Plato's theory of ideas which begins as a method of dealing with class concepts, passes over into an hypothesis to explain the existence of the world of phenomena. This again becomes a teleological conception by the thought that the relation between

οὐσία and γένεσις is that of purpose, and, finally, we reach the notion of the Idea of the Good as the highest concept, in the light of which alone we may see the whole as a rational order, so that Plato can speak of the Good as being above knowledge and truth and as the principle from which all objects of knowledge derive their reality.[1] The justness of Plato's insight is hardly to be questioned. We might be convinced that the world was a delicately adjusted machine and yet remain unsatisfied if we could suspect that it was an "infernal machine" (the phrase is Dr. Rashdall's). It might be shown that reality was one vast life-impulse and yet we might wonder whether the life was worth living. Or again, the universe in all its multifarious variety might be shown to be the infinite exfoliation of an Idea, and yet we might wonder whether the idea was a good idea. Constructive philosophy must fall short of its aim unless "the Moral Order or the Order of Value, is to be taken as the interpretation of all the others. It certainly seems that the subordination of everything to the realisation of what is intrinsically good or beautiful is the only way in which we can definitely conceive of a completely ordered system."[2] We must indeed admit the possibility that reality is of such a nature as to frustrate the demands which our judgements of value would make upon it, that the clue of the Good should lead

[1] Cf. *Republic*, 508, 509. Windelband, *History of Ancient Philosophy*, pp. 196 ff.

[2] J. S. Mackenzie, *Elements of Constructive Philosophy*, p. 114.

us to an impasse instead of to the centre. If it were conceivable that sufficient evidence could ever be accumulated to prove in this matter a negative, we should be forced to confess that the world was not in the highest sense rational, and that however greatly our insight into the "how" of its events were enlarged, its "why" must remain a question without an answer. We may conclude, therefore, that the proposal to rule moral phenomena out of consideration is unreasonable; and further, that if the universe is completely rational, judgements of value will be of determining importance in our interpretation of its meaning.

I

Probably the most important contribution of the nineteenth century to thought has been the concept of evolution. Henceforward it should be as impossible as it is unsafe to discourse of the moral consciousness without reference to the long history that lies behind its present stage of development. That our moral ideas have sprung from humble and even ludicrous origins should remind us that, as we do not stand at the beginning, so we have not arrived at the end of the moral development of mankind. It is no longer permissible to treat all our judgements of value as if they were fixed and unalterable. The conscience may be, as Butler said, the "candle of the Lord," but we must allow that the candle has taken a long time in burning up. A common opinion

is that Theism has some interest in denying the development of moral ideas, or at least that moral evolution constitutes for it a special problem. This opinion may have gained some colour of reason from the writings of older defenders of Theism, but it is so far from being true that we shall find in a consideration of the evolution of morals some evidence for the theistic hypothesis.

The discussions of the last century have done something more than stamp the idea of development deeply into the general mind; they have also revealed the bankruptcy of the only conception of evolution which is agreeable with the naturalistic hypothesis. The fundamental assumption of this false evolutionism is that it is possible to "explain" the higher by the lower, that when you have described the passage from primitive beginnings to developed types of existence you have given a sufficient account of the whole, that evolution produces nothing that is really new, but only more complex integrations of a few simple elements. Under this dissection, consciousness is the "compounding" of non-conscious elements, morality is merely a system of taboos, and the sense of obligation an inherited and irrational instinct of fear; religion is an etherealised fetish-worship; and, since science has also evolved, men of science, we must suppose, medicine men who have acquired some vastly mysterious incantations.

Yet unsatisfactory as we must needs hold such

writers as Herbert Spencer to be, we should be very wide of the mark if we denied that they were trying to grapple with a real problem. A part of their inadequacy arises from the fact that they did not realise how serious and far-reaching that problem really was. We are, in fact, confronted with a serious dilemma. On the one side we must confess that moral ideals have developed, and that many such ideals which were authoritative in the past have ceased to be authoritative for us; nor can we take our own ideals out of the stream of development and regard them with any reason as exempt from the law of change. Yet, on the other hand, we cannot be content to rest in this view, for we are impelled to attribute an absolute authority to our moral ideals, and we should feel that our moral life had been misrepresented if the ideals which guide it were interpreted as being simply those principles of conduct which happened to be prevalent at the period of history in which we chanced to be born. The question then presents itself in this form: How are we to account for the development of our moral ideals without evacuating them of all authority?

A favourite line of thought with writers of a naturalistic tendency is to resort to biological analogies in dealing with moral evolution. We may therefore examine the possibility that the notion of "survival value" will throw some light upon our problem. It may be urged that those moral codes and ideals of life have persisted which have conferred advantages in

the struggle for existence on those who have held them, and that this is the explanation of the phenomenon. That the existing moral conceptions of civilised races have had survival value is clearly in some sense true, since they have, in fact, survived. Nor need we deny that, from a purely biological point of view, those communities which have been most deeply affected by ideals such as justice and co-operation have acquired a cohesion and stability which must have tended to perpetuate them. But this external view of the evolution of moral ideas will not carry us very far, and is, in fact, unable to explain even that limited portion of the phenomena which it recognises. It is far from being obvious that a life of love and unselfishness brings in most cases an added chance of survival, and it is obvious that the tendency must frequently, to say the least, be in an opposite direction. It is an old topic of ethical argument that the appearance of virtue, on a naturalistic view, is more useful than the reality; and a purely biological account of evolution would appear to throw more light on the persistence of hypocrisy than on the advance of ethical ideals.

But this is the smallest of the difficulties in which the naturalistic hypothesis is entangled. Even if it were allowed that it could give some plausible account of the survival of some moral conceptions rather than others, it seems to have little to say on the question of why new moral ideals are evolved. The theory of natural selection as the cause of the origin of

species has to take for granted the fact of variation, and, in the same way, it can give no explanation of the emergence of new moral concepts, which is precisely the problem we are most concerned to have elucidated. No one, it is to be presumed, will assert that the ideals of justice and brotherhood take shape in the mind as excellent dodges to preserve the species, though later reflection may show that they do actually have this effect. Nor, again, is any real light thrown on the problem by referring to instinct. It may be true that the germ of altruism is to be found in parental or some other instinct and that an evolutionary process can be traced from the one to the other. But that would not be even the beginning of an answer to our question: for altruism is not parental instinct, nor is the ideal of brotherhood a complex instinct of any kind. It has emerged as a governing idea, as a conceptual principle of action; and we want to know why this evolution has taken place.

But the most serious count in the indictment against Naturalism has yet to be stated. If it were true, which is, in fact, most false, that a purely biological theory of evolution could give an acceptable version of the rise and development of ethical ideas, we should still be driven to seek some further ground for them on pain of divesting them of all authority. The position of naturalistic evolutionism here is closely analogous to its treatment of the problems of knowledge and truth. In both cases it

must end in scepticism. If we can say of true judgements no more than that they are those which aid the survival of those who form them, the term "truth" has lost its significance. We are reduced to a scepticism in which all knowledge, including the theory of evolution itself, is ruined. Just as certainly a naturalistic theory of evolution will involve us in ethical scepticism, and for the same reasons. If we can say of judgements of value no more than that they tend to preserve those who hold them, we have reduced moral authority to the level of mere convenience. There can be no categorical imperative, but only a hypothetical imperative. But let us observe that even this hypothetical imperative will rest on a dogma which is ambiguous and indeed, on the naturalistic hypothesis, without meaning. Moral imperatives will persist in rational minds only so long as it is believed that the race is worth preserving, or that some portion of the race is worth preserving, or that this individual is worth preserving; for any one of these interpretations may be given to the doctrine that true moral judgements are those that have survival value. But unfortunately none of these interpretations can have any meaning on naturalistic principles, for it is clearly nonsense to speak of the race as having value in the sense that it tends to preserve the race. We are thus led to see that the naturalistic doctrine of the development of morality will lead to the denial of all rational authority in morality unless we are able to accept

a presupposition for which Naturalism is not only unable to advance any reasons, but which it is unable to state without self-contradiction. It may fairly be said that the hypothesis is not only refuted, but has pointed us beyond itself for a solution to our problem.

It is easy for defenders of Theism to assume that when they have destroyed Naturalism they have established their own case. But, as we have seen, constructive philosophies do not lend themselves to this simple dichotomous division; nor can it be asserted that Theism is the only view that offers a defensible account of the phenomena of moral development. But it may be argued that no other hypothesis is in so favourable a position to deal with the problem of accounting for our moral development without evacuating our moral ideals of their authority. The world possesses the characteristic that in it moral ideals are formed, go through a process of development, and as we are compelled to believe, on the whole, the higher ideals tend to prevail and survive. Yet, so long as we conceive the environment of man under purely physical and biological categories, we can see no reason for this development and no ground for our belief. Shall we then abandon the biological clue altogether and hold that survival and adaptation to environment have nothing to do with moral evolution? This would be a desperate remedy, for it would remove a principle of explanation which has been found fruitful without leaving any obvious alternative. It will be more natural to find in the

break-down of Naturalism an indication that we should take a wider view of the environment. It is true that man survives only by adjusting himself to his environment and his ideals survive or perish, flourish or decay, along with him; but it is an environment which presses upon him satisfactions above those which are merely animal, which encourages him to pursue ideal ends hardly capable of realisation in this present order. It is difficult to see what this can mean except that the universe is wrongly conceived simply as matter or life. Those are aspects of it: but as well, it has characteristics which can only be described as spiritual.

Still more clearly does a theistic hypothesis seem supported by the emergence and gradual elevation of moral and social ideals in the life of humanity as a whole. The process presents itself, as T. H. Green has set it before us, in the light of a continued effort towards self-transcendence, a sustained but not unchecked impulse to set the individual in wider and more harmonious and more complex relations with all other individuals. The development of the moral consciousness suggests the presence of a spiritual life becoming more and more fully developed in humanity —" dass etwas übermenschliches im Menschen wirkt."

Such an interpretation of moral evolution would remove the difficulty which we have felt with regard to the authority of ideals which have evolved and are still in process of evolution. If we can regard the development of moral ideas as the progressive

expression of a λόγος ἐνδιάθετος, of an immanent spirit, and if, moreover, we have seen reason to believe that the moral ideals thus developed must be in a harmony, though a somewhat mysterious harmony, with the environment in which man lives (in other words, with the rest of the universe), we have some ground for supposing that the developing moral consciousness is a revelation of the purpose of the world as a whole. At least it may be said that such a view would enable us to allow full weight to the undeniable facts of moral evolution, while maintaining undiminished the authority of our own moral ideals.

I do not assert that this conclusion establishes the theistic hypothesis, but at the same time I would urge that Theism is free from certain difficulties which attach to rival hypotheses. At first sight it might appear that Absolute Idealism with its doctrine of immanence would be most clearly suggested by the facts. But, as we saw in the last lecture, Absolute Idealism is really incompatible with the notion of immanence, and one of the greatest difficulties with that hypothesis is to explain how there comes to be even an appearance of historical development. To put the matter shortly, moral evolution is more in harmony with the hope that "God shall be all in all" than with the assurance that He is all in all already. Against Radical Pluralism we may point to the unity of moral evolution. I do not think that we can escape from the impression that the moral

history of mankind is, at bottom, one. Ethical evolution in widely separated portions of the human race tends in the same direction; with wide diversity of detail and emphasis, the same virtues and kinds of character are venerated and desired by the higher minds of very various historical periods and races. And if the moral development of humanity is one whole it must be the work of one immanent Spirit. It would of course be easy to argue against this and to dwell upon the admitted divergence of moral types, but there is good reason to believe that moral development is converging on a common ideal, and this fact, so far as it is a fact, is plainly in harmony with the theistic hypothesis and not in harmony with that of Pluralism.

We may now sum up the result of this brief survey of the problems raised by the historical development of moral concepts. We have found that a naturalistic hypothesis is inadequate to explain the facts, and still more certainly that it would issue in a negation of all authority for moral ideals. We were therefore led to hold that some form of "spiritualistic" hypothesis must be adopted if we would escape these consequences. We then proceeded to ask what form of spiritualistic philosophy is most consonant with the facts? And it appeared that Absolute Idealism would find a difficulty in allowing any real development at all, while Radical Pluralism would be hard to reconcile with the apparent unity of the process of development. It is therefore evident

that moral evolution affords us with some ground for claiming the superior probability of Theism.

II

We must now proceed to consider the moral consciousness as it exists in individuals. In dealing with this we shall have two objects in view: first, to discover if the moral life depends on any implicit assumptions about the nature of man and his relation with the world as a whole, and, secondly, to inquire on what conditions those assumptions can be justified. These two questions are, it need hardly be said, closely connected, for if we proved that morality rested on certain assumptions but that these assumptions were untrue, we should be compelled to regard the moral life as irrational. It will be sufficient for our purpose to call attention to two familiar principles, the authority of moral ideals and the objectivity which we naturally assign to the moral law.

The sense of obligation, the ought, is the "form of the moral life." Without it we should not judge that moral experience in any true sense existed, and on the other hand wherever there is the recognition of obligation we should use the word "moral" to describe the experience. This element of the moral life, it is true, co-exists with many various conceptions of the law which ought to be obeyed or the end which ought to be pursued, and many vary indefinitely in intensity and explicitness. At the lowest it is a

dim and half-recognised feeling that certain aims have more worth than others; but in its developed form it emerges as a conscious judgement that there are some aims which have a supreme and overruling claim on my allegiance, and that in disregarding this judgement I shall be violating that element in my nature which has most clearly a right to my obedience. Whatever criticism may be made on the accuracy of this description, it can hardly be denied that the feeling of obligation exists, or that Butler was right in saying that a claim to authority was the fundamental character of the conscience. "Had it power as it has authority, it would absolutely rule the world."

Before we can build any inference about the nature of Reality on the sense of obligation we must reject two methods of explaining it, or rather of avoiding an explanation. We must first reject any view which would be satisfied with a purely psychological or "evolutionary" account. After what has already been said in the first part of this lecture there is no need to labour the point that to resolve the sense of obligation into other and lower elements, as is attempted, for example, by Spencer in the *Data of Ethics*, is to destroy it. If moral obligation is no more than inherited irrational fears it will be the part of every sensible man to divest himself of this survival. But, secondly, it has been held by some that the fact of obligation must be accepted as ultimate. It is true indeed, so it is argued, that I ought to seek the good and that I so judge, but this

fact has no metaphysical significance. This, so far as I understand it, is the position taken up by Dr. Moore in *Principia Ethica.*

I do not see how one who takes this view can be compelled to go beyond it any more than a man who has determined to go no more than fifty yards along a road can be compelled to go a hundred. But at least we may point out the existence of the road and modestly claim the right to use it ourselves in the hope that a further effort may lead to things worth seeing. And it is certainly possible to ask the question, On what conditions can the sense of obligation be justified? Admitting that I believe myself to have true judgements on the nature of the Good and that I believe myself to be under an obligation to pursue the Good, in what kind of universe would these beliefs of mine be justified?

We may at once eliminate any view which would give a purely external derivation to the moral law, any view, that is, which can find no basis in the nature of the moral self for the obligations of the self. This principle will rule out both Naturalism and Deism. A moral law which is collected by mere observation of external nature can possess no authority over a self which can distinguish itself from and oppose itself to externality. If I am asked to reverence a law of nature, it must be a law of my nature and not of a system in which my ego is a passive atom or an empirical product. A theory which bases the moral law on the arbitrary fiat of a transcendent Deity will

be equally destructive of the authority of moral laws. In some famous sentences Calvin gives expression to this view. "The will of God is the supreme rule of righteousness, so that everything which He wills must be held to be righteous by the mere fact of His willing it. Therefore when it is asked why the Lord did so we must answer, Because He pleased."[1] But it is obvious that a law externally imposed can possess no inherent authority but only that compulsory force which the Deity may exercise by an appeal to my hopes and fears. I may obey Him because I hope for heaven or dread hell, but it will not be a moral obedience nor will His commands possess any moral authority. It is thus clear that the only moral judgement which can have intrinsic authority is one that springs from the nature of the personality. It was this truth that Kant expressed in the phrase "the autonomy of the practical reason," and which was put more simply but I think more accurately by St. Paul and Butler when they said that "man is a law unto himself."

Modern writers on Ethics of the idealistic school have adopted a way of expressing this truth which is worth attention because it describes in an apt phrase this aspect of moral experience. It is said that the moral life consists in realising the "true" or "real" self. I do not wish to defend the expression against the criticisms of Dr. Rashdall,[2]

[1] *Institutes*, Book III. 22. 2.
[2] *Theory of Good and Evil*, vol. ii. chap. iii.

or to deny that it seems difficult to interpret it in any exact sense. It is indeed not easy to see how I can be greatly concerned with making more real that which is already most real. But, at the same time, this way of putting the case is an admirable description of our attitude towards our moral ideals. The effort of the moral life is not thought of as an attempt to destroy our personality and to become some one else. It is conceived as a striving to be oneself, to enter into possession of one's full nature, to give expression to a character which is immanent, latent, waiting to be born, which nevertheless has more right to exist than the actual self of our normal lives. There is undoubtedly an element of paradox in all this; but I think that it cannot be questioned that it is a good statement of our actual moral experience, and I hope to show that Theism alone can remove the paradox.

The second assumption which we make when we act as moral beings is the objectivity of the moral ideal. If there were no ground for judgements of value and no standard of worth beyond the passing and irrational preferences of individuals, if moral approbation meant no more than a "pleasing sentiment of approbation," we should agree, I imagine, that morality in the ordinary sense would be impossible. Nor again should we be prepared, in Martineau's phrase, to determine our moral judgements by a "social vote." No consensus of human judgement on questions of moral value, however impressive, would fully satisfy

our demand for objectivity. If some Athanasius of morals were to arise and to be even literally *contra mundum*, we should not regard it as sufficient refutation to point out that he was in a minority of one. Both majority and minority would appeal to some standard which existed independently of the opinions of either. The very fact that we take for granted that it is possible to discuss problems of conduct and to compare ideals of life reveals that we do, implicitly or explicitly, assume an objective standard and refuse to decide such controversies on the ground of personal taste or collective prejudice. It is of course true that moral duties are in a sense relative. The particular actions and ends which we ought to choose are determined by the conditions of our lives and vary with infinite complexity. But this is not in the least incompatible with the objectivity of the moral ideal, but is a necessary consequence of the fact that one objective Good is being sought by many persons, each of whom differs from all the others in endowments, history, and environment. In short, without particular occasions there would be no moral *action*, but without an objective ideal there would be no *moral* action.[1]

Now if it be agreed that these two assumptions do in fact lie at the basis of our moral life, we shall have little difficulty in showing that they can only be justified on a theistic hypothesis. Let us begin with the objectivity of the moral ideal. It is assumed

[1] Cf. Sorley, *Moral Values and the Idea of God*, p. 139 and pp. 150, 151.

that the moral ideal has objective existence of some kind, that it does not live solely in the apprehension of it possessed by me or by any other human individual. But we may ask in what sense can a moral ideal be said to have an objective reality? If we consider some existing entities we shall come to the conclusion that the word "exist" is used in more than one sense. Thus real chairs and tables exist, and so do the properties of a triangle, but the type of existence of the chair, the meaning of the affirmation "it is real," is different from that of the properties of a triangle. We need not pursue the question here as to wherein this difference consists, because our object in referring to it is to point out that an ideal has a special mode of existence of its own. It cannot exist in the same sense as the chair, that is as a part of what common sense means by the "real world," because if it did so it would have lost its character of an ideal and become an achieved actuality. Nor again can an ideal exist in the same sense as the properties of a triangle, for they are necessary and invariable characters of all triangles, whereas it is a mark of an ideal that it is not a necessary and invariable character but a contingent and problematic one. An ideal appears to be essentially a mental content held over against a discrepant actuality. It requires a certain duality and effect of contrast, without which it will cease to exist as an ideal. If the contrast is abolished by the complete achievement of the ideal it will have passed over

into another mode of being. It will be said that ideals may be realised and yet not cease to be ideals. But I would reply that if indeed an ideal were completely and finally realised it would not exist as an ideal, but that in most if not all cases when we speak of an ideal as realised we do so in a relative sense. There remains the effort to hold actuality into conformity with the ideal content, to keep it faithful to the pattern in the soul, and this effort and vigilance are the signs of a persisting duality: the discrepancy is not abolished, it is only "nigh unto vanishing." It seems clear, therefore, that to conceive the moral ideal as having objective reality and at the same time as being an ideal, we shall be compelled to think of it as a completely conceived but as yet unrealised purpose: as a mental content which is distinct from the existing order. In other words, we are led to postulate a transcendent teleology, a purposive Intelligence which is not identical with the actual world.

The conclusion which we have now reached might perhaps be compatible with a Deistic doctrine of pure transcendence; but we shall find that the fact of obligation will correct that impression. If we remained content with a doctrine of pure transcendence we should cut ourselves off from all hope of giving any satisfactory account of the authority of the moral ideal. As we have already seen, the moral law, though objective and independent of any personal desires, must yet, if it is to possess authority, find some ground in my nature. That the world

should have a purpose is doubtless, on any view, an interesting and even important piece of information; but if that purpose finds no echo in my soul, if I can know it only by a revelation which is accredited solely by external evidence, if I can co-operate with it only by conforming to rules which have no ground in my own being, such a purpose can never command my reverence with that authority which we attach to the dictates of the conscience. But if, on the other hand, I am right in assuming that in furthering the Common Good I am also attaining the end which is immanent in my own nature, that by taking thought for the ultimate Good I am considering also my own good, that by obeying the objective moral law I am developing that element in my personality which has most right to exist, then the sense of obligation is abundantly justified, I am "a law unto myself." Who can doubt that Theism is the view of the world which most adequately allows for these diverse presuppositions of the moral life? It holds that the Deity transcends the temporal order, and therefore that the moral ideal is objective and objective as an ideal. But at the same time, with its doctrine of the immanent Word or Reason, it enjoins us to hold that the apprehension whereby we discern the Good is the reflection of the Divine knowledge, and that the will whereby we attempt to realise the Good is not unrelated with the will whereby God seeks to realise His own end.

We shall fail to appreciate the strength of this

intellectualism of the official dogmatic theology of the Roman church, and a desire to substitute for it a treatment of doctrine which is more in accordance with modern habits of thought. I think, however, that it must be confessed that this necessary protest has not infrequently led to a use of language which errs on the opposite side, and might give some ground for supposing that Modernism is opposed to the application of every kind of rational method in questions of religion. Thus we are assured that "the intellectual element in faith exists, but it exists as a derivative from some profounder and more vital action of faith." [1] And this summary statement may be taken as fairly representative of a common Modernist manner of speech.

Now this kind of utterance may be no more than a somewhat emphatic assertion that the intellectual element is implicit rather than explicit in some types of religion, and with that we should have no quarrel. But when we turn to the Modernist account of the development of dogma we find good reason for believing that we are confronted once more with the view that religious affirmations can be based upon uncriticised experience. The works of Loisy and Tyrrell are largely directed to the vindication of the place of the Church in the evolution of Christianity, and to establish the right of Christian history to be regarded as an integral part of the significance of the Gospel. But if this principle is pushed so far as to

[1] A. L. Lilley, *Ency. of Religion and Ethics*, vol. viii. p. 767.

and its appearances is not different from Infinite Substance and its modes. As we saw in the last lecture, the reason for the apparent existence of the finite and temporal order is as obscure for Mr. Bradley as it was for Spinoza. Two points at least are clear: on this hypothesis the Absolute can have no purpose, at least no unfulfilled purpose, and therefore the moral ideal cannot be objective as an ideal: and Reality as a whole is perfect and complete, every appearance ministers to the perfection of the whole. Thus, if there is an objective standard at all, it is the whole of reality which is timelessly perfect, and the ideal is already realised. Under these conditions it must remain a profound enigma how we can regard as rational an activity which seeks to realise an ideal which is already realised or to increase a perfection which is capable neither of increment nor diminution.

When we pass on to consider dynamic Immanentism or Vitalism we are conscious of a lamentable lack of guidance, for M. Bergson has unfortunately given little attention to ethical problems. As we have seen, he rejects "radical finalism" in the sense that all events are predetermined by a preconceived end, but I do not understand that he has precluded the possibility of that transcendent teleology which we have found to be no less a postulate of morality than a fundamental doctrine of Theism. If, however, we take his philosophy without those revisions and supplements which seem required we shall find it very difficult to discover any basis for ethics. The

most obvious suggestion would be that we should look for a further exploitation of the idea that life is the good, along the lines which are familiar in the pages of Spencer and Guyau, with the addition that mechanism is the devil. The defects of such a position are too numerous and too well known to need mention here. Chief among them is the fact that it is directly opposed to the judgements of value which we actually make. In them we are concerned not with quantity of life but with quality, and it is precisely for some objective basis to discriminate between qualities that we look to this theory in vain. It is also clear that a completely non-teleological Vitalism can afford no place for an objective moral ideal. If the life-impulse has no purpose and no end we are quite unable to co-operate with it, and there is no ideal aim in the universe wider or more comprehensive than those which we ourselves may form. If the vitalistic hypothesis is to be brought into harmony with the moral experience of mankind and with the postulates on which that experience rests, no great transformation is needed. The teleological elements which are already latent need to be made more explicit and the myth of a "blind" stream of energy finally driven out. In other words, it must approximate more closely to Theism. Perhaps I may be allowed to add that there is a practical urgency about the thinking out of the ethical implications of Vitalism which possibly does not exist in the case of other theories. Hasty

deductions have here the seed of real disaster in them. Just as the syndicalists have, with some show of logic, deduced from M. Bergson's writings the conclusion that the trammels of the State are an impediment to the free development of the life-impulse, so there are still more dangerous persons who are not slow to draw the inference that the impalpable restraints of morality "mechanise" and restrict the vital energy which seeks expression in them.

Radical Pluralism need not detain us long. While it remains radical it can justify neither the "ought" nor the objectivity of the moral ideal. Among the Monads there is none who can envisage the complete ideal for the whole, nor can there be one whose life, immanent in all the others, forms the most significant element in their nature. If a form of Pluralism is held in which both these assertions can be made, we have passed over from radical Pluralism into Theism.

To sum up the argument of this section: we have found that the moral consciousness requires two postulates: (*a*) the objectivity of the moral ideal, (*b*) that the moral ideal should find some ground in the essential nature of the finite self. When we proceeded to ask in what sense an ideal can be objective we were led to the conclusion that it must be in the form of a completely conceived but imperfectly achieved purpose, and this carried us to the further result that only a view of the world which holds a transcendent teleology can maintain the objective nature of the moral law. The postulate that the

good should be in essential relation with the self forced us, however, to go beyond the belief in pure transcendence and affirm the complementary truth of immanence. It therefore appeared that a theistic hypothesis was directly suggested by the analysis of the moral life. This conclusion was strengthened by a brief examination of the position of rival hypotheses in this matter. We saw reason to believe that each of them was encumbered by insuperable difficulties in dealing with morality, difficulties which arose from the basic principles of the hypotheses and which could not be avoided except by a revision of the hypotheses in the direction of Theism. It was in fact difficult to resist the impression that any one who seriously accepted one of these rival views would be forced radically to revise the attitude which, as a plain man, he had been accustomed to adopt towards the claims of morality.

III

We will now go on to consider the content of the moral consciousness as it exists in the present stage of its development and in that portion of the human race which we may regard, let us hope without undue self-complacency, as the most advanced. As we have already observed, the facts of moral evolution must forbid us to assume that the moral ideas even of the most civilised races are final, and we shall not fall into the error of believing that our conception of

the ideal is incapable of enrichment or even of considerable modification. Nevertheless there are certain principles which are so firmly established and so generally admitted among us that we could hardly contemplate the possibility of a moral development which would leave them behind. The notions of Rational Benevolence and Rational Progress are deeply and, as it seems, inextricably interwoven with the moral advance of the race. The elevation of conduct and aspiration has centred round the enlargement and amplification of these two ideal principles, and we cannot doubt that the future will carry on the same process still further. We may therefore assume that the general conscience takes it for granted that it is rational to promote the good of others and to aid in the progress of humanity: and we shall raise the question here on what hypothesis about the general structure of Reality may these two principles be regarded as rational.

There is some doubt as to the precise meaning and scope which should be given to the principle of Rational Benevolence, as, for example, whether it should be taken as including the lower animals and, if so, with what modifications and to what extent. Important as these differences are in their practical bearings, we need not consider them for our present purpose, for we shall be safe in saying that the minimum significance of the principle of Rational Benevolence is that it is reasonable to promote the good of all human beings. Whatever else it may

imply, it means at least that. When, however, we proceed to ask in what sense this principle is rational we are confronted with a very difficult question on which, it must be confessed, ethical writers have not succeeded in reaching any tolerable amount of agreement. We need do no more than refer to J. S. Mill's heroic defiance of logic in the attempt to deduce Benevolence from self-interest, or to Spencer's laboured and irrelevant demonstration that if Egoism and Altruism do not coincide for us they will do so for some limited period in an indefinite future. These things belong to the curiosities of literature and are interesting as illustrations of the need which men feel for some rational justification of a principle which in practice they cannot abandon. A view which deserves much more respectful consideration is that which was stated by Professor Sidgwick and has recently been supported in an interesting essay by Miss E. G. Constance Jones.[1] According to this theory, as I understand it, the principle of Benevolence is self-evident and consequently neither needs nor is capable of any further justification. It would be as absurd to require any further ground for it as it would be to ask what is the reason for the logical principles of Non-Contradiction. Let us look a little further into this assertion.

Most of us would, I suppose, admit that the principle of Benevolence is in some sense self-evident.

[1] *Methods of Ethics*, 7th ed., p. 382; *Proceedings of Aristotelian Society*, 1917–18.

We should at any rate feel that to doubt it would be to cause a break-up of our moral life, and that a general disbelief in it must have disastrous consequences. But this is very far from what ought to be meant by the claim that a principle is intrinsically self-evident. Can it really be asserted that all minds which are capable of understanding the meaning of the principle are unable to question its truth? I find it difficult to exorcise the doubt whether the assertion that the principle of Benevolence is self-evident really means much more than that a considerable number of people do, as a matter of fact, agree in accepting it without being conscious of the need of any further inquiry, just as many people have accepted, with unquestioning faith, the belief that the sky is an inverted crystal bowl. It is undoubtedly true that there are no persons who would deny that it appears rational to them to pursue their own good, however widely they may differ in their conceptions of the nature of that good. To that extent we must, I think, admit that the Utilitarians were right in beginning with the good of the individual, though they adopted a grievously narrow view of the nature of the good which vitiated the whole of their subsequent argument. I should agree that Egoism has some title to be called a self-evident principle, with the proviso that where this principle will lead us depends entirely on the view we take of the essential nature of the ego. But when we turn to the principle of Rational Benevolence the position

is quite different. So far as the evidence goes, it is apparent that there is a large number of rational beings who do not consider it to be reasonable to pursue the good of all other persons. This might be true and yet the principle might be self-evident, because a self-evident proposition is not one which is evident to every one, but only to every one who has understood its meaning. It might be argued then that the principle of Rational Benevolence appears self-evident to all those who have grasped its significance and reflected upon it. It may be so; but I think that, if experience is to count at all in this matter, it is improbable. But we are not left to the dubious and invidious task of estimating the intellectual capacity and the moral convictions of our own personal acquaintances to decide this question. If men are to be supposed to attach any meaning to words which they deliberately write and publish in serious books, it is certain that Nietzsche, in the final phase of his development, both understood the meaning of the principle of Rational Benevolence and rejected it. It seems, therefore, that we have no reason for thinking that the principle of Benevolence is, in any strict sense, self-evident.

But, further, even if there were good reason for supposing that the principle of Rational Benevolence is self-evident, we should still require another assumption in order to make it fruitful as a practical maxim. If we agree that it is rational to promote the good of all other persons, we shall not be able to begin to

act upon this principle unless we can be assured that we have some knowledge of what their good is. It would obviously be impossible for me to further the well-being of others if they were so different from me that my judgements of what is valuable had no application to them. We must have some means of transcending ethical atomism. It is surely a question which deserves attention: What is the justification for the assumption that the judgements of value which I make are valid for those others whose good I am told I ought to promote? It may again be said that this is a self-evident proposition: but again we may doubt whether its self-evidence consists in anything more than that it would be unfortunate if it were untrue. I do not wish, of course, to throw the smallest doubt on the truth of the principle in question, but only to point out that its truth must depend on some metaphysical assumption, on some implicit view of the nature of the world.

We cannot then accept the assurance that the principle of Rational Benevolence is self-evident. Yet we cannot be satisfied with this negative result. We have agreed that Rational Benevolence is for us an essential element in the content of the moral consciousness. Without it we should feel that morality, as we understand it, had hardly begun; its august counsels would have shrunk to a banal collection of prudential maxims based upon empirical evidence. Yet if the life which we call good should turn out to be dependent on a dogma neither self-

evident nor capable of other support it would surely be a strange abuse of language to call such a life rational, and a remarkable instance of the divorce of theoretical opinions from practical action if it should continue to be lived. If, however, we continue to affirm, as I suppose we do, both that the good life includes Benevolence and that it is rational it must be because we have some metaphysical grounds for doing so; in other words, there must be some view of the universe, held explicitly or implicitly, in the light of which the principle will appear rational.

It would be wearisome and unnecessary to recapitulate once more the various possible hypotheses and to examine them in detail with this intention. I will simply say, in what I fear must appear a somewhat dogmatic way, that Absolute Idealism by denying substantial existence to finite selves really evades this problem, while Radical Pluralism must have great difficulty in giving any account of the Common Good. It must indeed be sufficiently obvious that, to say no more, a theistic hypothesis is in a more favourable position than any other for dealing with the problem. It recognises the problem. It does not question the real existence of the finite selves and their substantive difference from all else, and in this it is in harmony with moral experience. But it must hold that all persons are of the same nature, since they proceed from a common spiritual Source. It must hold that their judgements about the Good are not merely personal, since it affirms a

pervading immanent Spirit whose activity is most clearly manifested in our moral ideals. It therefore gives us a reason for transcending ethical atomism, because it must hold that there can be no irreconcilable conflict between the good of one individual and the good of others, since it believes that all spiritual beings move towards an Inclusive End towards which they are drawn but not compelled. I do not assert that Theism leaves no problem in connection with the relation between self-interest and benevolence: in particular, I do not wish to imply that it will do anything to reduce the number of cases of practical perplexity which form the subject-matter of casuistry. But we may claim that it removes the chief theoretical difficulty. If Theism is true, I am justified in believing that, if I rightly judge my own good and pursue it, I am thereby pursuing the good of all other persons, and, conversely, if I rightly judge the good of others and pursue it, I am thereby pursuing my own good. In short, on the theistic hypothesis the life of goodness is rational, while on any other it is not.

It will now be instructive to turn our attention to the second principle which has become deeply seated in the conscience of Christendom—that of Rational Progress. Strictly speaking, this is a special form of the principle of Benevolence and gives rise to the same problems. If it is not easy to say why it is rational for me to promote the good of others who are my contemporaries, it is still less easy to say

why I should think it rational to promote the good of generations which I can never hope to see. There is some serious matter in the jest, "Why should I worry about posterity? It has never done anything for me." But it is not for the purpose of discussing the same questions over again in a different setting that I have brought the idea of progress to your attention. There are some special points in connection with it which may deserve some thought.

A great part of the activity which we should describe as distinctively moral is governed by the idea of progress. "Show thy servants thy work and their children thy glory" is an aspiration which, expressed perhaps in other words, is constantly in the hearts of the nobler spirits of our time. But in devoting ourselves to the promotion of progress we assume that we have some idea of what progress means. Few people would seriously argue that change as such and for its own sake, irrespective of the kind of change, was a worthy object of endeavour. We do, in fact, take for granted that one state of society is better than another, and that some criterion of progress is available. We should regard a man who set out to break up the present order without any idea of what should be put in its place as a dangerous lunatic. Now any criterion of social progress must be expressed in the form of a Social End and must imply the conception of a Common Good. Any particular condition of social organisation will then be estimated in relation to this idea of the Social

End. Perhaps this way of putting it is open to the objection that it is quite possible to judge that one society is better than another without having a definite conception of a perfect society. It must be admitted that we may form correct judgements of value on social questions without having any explicit conception of an ultimate Social Good, and also that the imagining of Utopias has sometimes proved to be an enemy of real progress. But that is not the point. The essential fact is that when we reflect upon the idea of progress and desire to convince ourselves that an interest in the advance of the race is a rational one, we are led to formulate some criterion of progress and thence to go on to form some idea, if only as a limiting concept, of a social state beyond which progress would be impossible. That we should be able to present this to our minds in any precise detail is, of course, not to be supposed; but it is equally inconceivable that we should have no idea of it at all. For if we take it for granted, as we must unless our desire for progress is quite irrational, that we have valid tests of progress, we must assume that, whatever else it may be, the ultimate Social End will be a society in which these tests are completely satisfied.

It follows, therefore, that there can be no difficulty in describing in outline the ultimate Social End. It will be the perfection of that which is the essential nature of society—intercourse. It may be described as perfected intercourse. Nor is it hard to discover

the conditions which the conception of perfected intercourse would require. Negatively, we must imagine the removal of all those impediments to harmonious and creative fellowship which seem to be inherent in the present order, together with those restrictions and defeats which, in human society, are imposed by one person upon another. Positively, we must conceive an intercourse through and in which all who participate in it enjoy the full, free, and unfettered exercise of their powers. The most intense and purest love between two persons, a love in which neither is absorbed or dominated, but which evokes in each continually the best and noblest thoughts and actions, is a faint analogy of that intercourse which would be the fundamental characteristic of the perfect society. But we must consider not only the nature of the intercourse demanded by the perfect community but its extent; and it is clear that we should not judge that the end had been achieved unless it included all persons. So long as some persons remained outside the community or imperfectly incorporated within it, progress to a better society would be possible. We must add therefore that the Social End will be inclusive.

But the question which at once suggests itself is, Can this Social End be attained, and if so, on what conditions? Is it merely an abstract construction or is it a state of living together which may be realised? In order to bring the discussion within reasonable bounds I must rule out at the beginning any view

which would suggest that the Social End is attained in the "absorption" or "transmutation" of persons in some Absolute Experience. I do so on the ground that we are in search of a "human" good, at least of one which will not negate the essential nature of our life in community. An end in which intercourse is abolished is one which, I think, we neither desire as a good nor have any reason for accepting as a possible criterion of progress. Admitting then that the Social End cannot be non-social, we have still to ask whether that end is attainable. The answer is obvious. The end precisely as we have defined it, by the conception of idealised society and intercourse, is beyond all possibility of attainment. I do not refer to the inhibitions which are imposed by the conditions of the present order, for it is conceivable that they might be changed. The difficulty lies deeper and is inherent in the nature of the end itself. Any order of existence in which we retained our character as finite persons would be one in which the end could not be realised. For the end requires perfected intercourse between all finite persons, and this is impossible so long as they remain finite, and equally impossible if they become infinite. Undoubtedly it is true that all persons are in some relation to all others, but they could not be in that full, conscious, and creative relation of intercourse which we have found to be necessary and at the same time retain their being as finite individuals.

Is the conclusion, then, inevitable that the end

of progress not only may never be achieved but quite certainly cannot be? Is all advance in social integration and creative fellowship an approximation to an ideal which is self-contradictory? Is the kingdom of man doomed to be eternally divided against itself? This, indeed, would seem to be the view forced upon us on any hypothesis save one. On the theistic hypothesis the end is not inconceivable, and the Kingdom of God is not rent by incurable contradiction. For Theism holds that there is a great Focus and Centre of spirits, a Mind and Character wide and pure enough to engage the love of all persons, in loving whom we love all that is worthy of affection in all finite beings. It holds that the highest blessedness for the individual is, not to be absorbed or abolished in Him, but to reach a state of will and affection in which God can be said to be living in the finite self. If this hypothesis were true the realisation of the Social End would be possible, not indeed in the precise form which we were led to give to it when we considered a purely human society, but still in its essential features. The theistic hypothesis allows us to conceive the possibility of a perfected intercourse which is all-embracing, including all persons, and which, at the same time, preserves and perfects their individual being.

An objection to all this lies on the surface and will serve to make the bearing of the argument clearer. It will be said, What ground have you for supposing that the Good is realisable? Let us admit that we

are here brought to the place where, in the last resort, we must make an act of faith or choice. It is something, after all, to have shown that, if I believe that the world is in the completest sense rational, I shall be compelled, when I think out the implications of my belief, to adopt a theistic hypothesis. But I may refuse to believe that the world is completely rational and, in that case, I shall be unaffected by the argument which we have just developed. But is the affirmation that the universe is completely rational, in principle, a more precarious assumption than that it is rational in a limited sense? If any one were to refuse to admit that reality was throughout intelligible and were to insist upon the possibility that some parts of the universe were opaque to our intellect, it would be impossible to refute him. He could only be proved to be wrong when the work of intelligence was completed. In the meantime we should be content with pointing out that the assumption is in fact made with regard to any particular portion of reality which is presented to our attention, and that a limited degree of success has attended the effort to apply the categories of our intelligence to the infinite mass of experience. I would urge that the assumption that the world is, in the full sense, rational, is simply the extension and completion of that act of faith which lies at the root of all knowledge, since, as we saw at the beginning of this lecture, it is only by thinking of the universe as a teleological system subordinate to the idea of the Good

that we can find any answer to the question why it exists.

It may be objected, further, that we have not explained why a process should be necessary. It may be said, "Would not the world be more rational if there were no struggle, no painful and halting progress, if the End were attained at a stroke?" I do not say that the answer which Theism has to offer is completely satisfactory or that it will enable us to clear up all the mysteries of the present order; but we may at least claim that Theism has some solution to give which will take us a certain way. As we have seen, it is just the existence of the world of moral effort and progress which the rival hypotheses are unable to explain. If we ask Absolute Idealism, we get no answer except that the vicissitudes of the temporal order are appearances of the Absolute and an admonition not to ask silly questions if we express curiosity as to why the Absolute should appear in this particular manner. Radical Pluralism and Vitalism are equally dumb oracles, for they plunge us straight away into the stream of becoming and refuse to allow us to lift our eyes beyond it. If it were true that Theism could give no account of the need of a process it would be in no worse case than any alternative hypothesis. But it has something to say which appears to go to the root of the question, though I agree that it leaves many particular problems for consideration. The answer, I take it, is in essence this: it is fallacious to draw so hard and fast a

distinction between means and end as to suppose that the end can exist in the same way and without modification if the means are abolished. The end is coloured by the means just as the means are determined by the end. Thus it is a misleading abstraction to conceive the ultimate Social Good as apart from the process which leads up to it. The end as conceived by Theism is not simply that of a community of persons without history. It is that of a Kingdom of God consisting of selves who have attained moral freedom and, through the exercise of that freedom, have constituted that intercourse in which the nature of the Social End consists. It is therefore true that the end implies the means in the sense that means and end are integral parts of one whole or, in other words, the process on the theistic hypothesis, the sphere of moral effort, is not an otiose and irrational addition to an otherwise rational world, but a necessary element of that world without which the end could not exist.

Let us now sum up the discussions of this part of our argument. Taking the content of the moral consciousness as it is observed in the most advanced types of civilisation, we found two principles of great importance which could hardly be dispensed with if morality as we know it is to continue — Rational Benevolence and Rational Progress. We have seen that there is little reason for regarding either principle as rational unless we adopt a theistic hypothesis, while, at the same time, we should be reluctant to

regard them as irrational. We are led to believe, therefore, that, if the moral life is a rational activity, Theism must be true. Again we argued that there is an ideal of social life implicit in the conception of progress, and that only on condition that this ideal was capable of realisation could we hold the world to be in any complete sense rational. But we found that on the Theistic hypothesis alone could this ideal be realisable, and we were led to the conclusion that, if we affirm that the universe is throughout rational, we must accept the theistic account of its structure.

In conclusion, let us remind ourselves of the cumulative nature of the argument which we have just completed. It does not depend on one thread or base itself upon a single aspect of the moral consciousness. We have examined the phenomena of morality from three different standpoints, with the assumption only that the good life cannot be irrational. In each case we have been led more or less directly to adopt the theistic hypothesis. To any mind which is not prepared to overlook the facts of ethics in forming an estimate of Reality this must have considerable weight; but to one which is inclined to attribute to these facts a primary importance the argument, I believe, must have almost overwhelming force.

LECTURE V

DIVINE PERSONALITY

THE conception of the Divine as personal is not a characteristic of universal religion. As we have already had occasion to notice, one very remarkable line of religious evolution was carried towards a position in which the Object of worship and aspiration tended to become more and more depersonalised. Though it is true that popular devotion retained the very personal deities of polytheism and never raised itself to a mystical devotion to the Absolute, yet we cannot doubt that a large part of the higher religious life of the East has been nourished on a conception of the world which has no place for a truly divine Person. It is also true that the conception of God which was taken over by modern European philosophy from the religious thought of the Christian church has in its hands not infrequently become an impersonal principle, an order of the universe, very different from the living and loving Heavenly Father to whom the name was originally applied.[1] We may regret the confusion which has been caused by the

[1] Cf. Sorley, *Moral Values and Idea of God*, pp. 303-4.

various meanings which have been given to the word, but we must also observe that many of the systems which appropriated the name and used it to signify "the final explanation which philosophy was able to give," though they were far from holding that this ultimate explanation was a Supreme Person, yet nurtured and recommended a spiritual life to which we must not refuse the name of religion. At the present day it would be unjust to suppose that Mr. Bradley and Dr. Bosanquet were indifferent to the claims of the religious life, or to hold that one who accepted their position would be compelled to abandon every form of religious aspiration.

But, although the religious life as such may be independent of belief in a personal God, it can hardly be maintained that Christianity is in the same position. Christianity is the most personal of religions: and its peculiar form of piety or religious experience depends to a degree unexampled elsewhere upon the thought of fellowship with God. The dominant note of Apostolic Christianity is that of loving fellowship with God and with one another. We are fellow-workers with God; not slaves but free children. The most mystical writer of the New Testament does not depart from this fundamental thought ὃ ἑωράκαμεν καὶ ἀκηκόαμεν, ἀπαγγέλλομεν καὶ ὑμῖν, ἵνα καὶ ὑμεῖς κοινωνίαν ἔχητε μεθ' ἡμῶν. καὶ ἡ κοινωνία δὲ ἡ ἡμετέρα μετὰ τοῦ πατρὸς καὶ μετὰ τοῦ υἱοῦ αὐτοῦ Ἰησοῦ Χριστοῦ. καὶ ταῦτα γράφομεν ἡμεῖς, ἵνα ἡ χαρὰ ἡμῶν ᾖ πεπληρωμένη.[1]

[1] 1 John i. 3.

But not less does this thought of *κοινωνία*, of fellowship, stand out as the salient feature of the great central stream of Christian life. There have been great masters of the spiritual life, truly Christian, who have set before themselves and us other versions of the Highest Good, such as complete union with God or even Absorption into the Divine. But great and impressive as some of these have been, when compared with the massive and central life of the Christian community, they appear as exceptions. A certain air of foreignness lurks about them, a perfume which belongs to Eastern climes. The typically Christian experience is neither union nor absorption but communion with God.

Our reflections on the moral argument for Theism have led us to a similar conclusion, and may be brought forward in the first place as the main reason for believing that God is personal. As we saw, the world cannot be considered completely rational unless we can suppose that the Social End is realised. But this, we found, implied the existence of a God with whom relations of intercourse were possible. Intercourse can subsist only between persons and has no meaning apart from them. The realisation of the social ideal, no less than the persistence of Christian experience, demands that we should be able to affirm the true personality, a real being for self, not only of finite persons but also of God. "The religious attitude—all that we mean by worship, adoration, self-surrender—is wholly impossible if the selves are

conceived as telephone-wires along which the Absolute acts or thinks," [1] and the Christian religious attitude, we may add, is wholly impossible, so long as we think of God as an automatic telephone exchange, the impersonal medium or order which makes possible the intercommunication of finite selves.

I

If we set out to answer the question, Is God personal? it is important to begin with some clear idea of its meaning, and, as a preliminary step, let us notice the difference between the question which we have to answer and another with which it is easily confused. The question means simply, Can the category of personality be applied without contradiction to the Deity, or are the two concepts, Deity and personality, mutually incompatible? In other words, when we think of God do we most truly think of Him under the form of personality, or is there some other concept available which would bring us nearer to the truth? But it must be carefully observed that this question is not the same as the question Is God a person? and it is quite possible that we might be led to deny that God was a person and yet affirm that God is personal. It is an interesting illustration of the distinction which we have drawn between the two questions that it is open to doubt whether it is orthodox to say that God is a person according to the Catholic tradition.

[1] Pringle-Pattison, *Idea of God*, p. 291.

As is well known, the history of the doctrine of the Trinity has been dominated by two motives: to preserve the divine unity and to maintain, at the same time, the reality of distinctions within that unity. Thus orthodoxy has condemned every view of the nature of the Godhead which emphasised the distinctions to such a degree as to threaten the unity, and equally has withstood the opposite tendency to make the distinctions unreal and thus to conceive the Deity as a unit rather than a unity. In the historical development of the doctrine now one motive and now the other has played the leading rôle. It is therefore not surprising that there has been considerable divergence of view among theologians who belong to the main stream of Catholic thought. The view of the Trinity which has prevailed in the West is that represented by Augustine and transmitted by him to the mediaeval theologians. This type of Trinitarian thought starts from the affirmation of the Divine unity, and strives to show that the distinctions within the Godhead which orthodox Christology requires may be reconciled with Monotheism. To use a phrase which Professor Pringle-Pattison has made current in philosophical discussion, the Augustinian type of theology treats the distinctions within the Godhead as "adjectival" rather than "substantival."[1] On this view the most fruitful analogy for the divine life is to be found in the human mind with

[1] Cf. Tennant, "The Doctrine of the Trinity," *Expositor*, Oct. 1918; Augustine, *De Trinitate*, v. 5 and v. 8; Ten Broecke, *A Constructive Basis for Theology*, p. 112.

its diverse aspects and functions. Thus we may gain some knowledge of the manner in which distinctions exist within the divine unity by considering the concurrence of memory, understanding, and will in the unity of a personal life. It is clear that this line of thought, if it were carried to an extreme, might lead to the conception of the "persons" of the Trinity as merely "aspects" of the Divine and would end in "Modalism" or Unitarianism, an imputation from which Augustine himself has not wholly escaped. For this type of theology God is a personal unity.

But a different method of approach to the doctrine of the Trinity is also represented in Christian Theology. Prior to the outbreak of the Arian controversy the great effort of Christian thought had been directed to the defence of the reality of the distinctions within the Godhead against the heresy of Sabellianism. "Sabellius had held for two generations the pre-eminence among heretics. To the Greek-speaking world outside Egypt the error which he and Paul of Samosata had taught, that God is one Person, was still the most dangerous of falsehoods."[1] Had the horror of Sabellianism remained a dominant motive in Theology we can hardly doubt that the application of the analogy of society to the Divine nature would have been more fully developed in patristic thought than was actually the case. There are, however,

[1] *Introduction to Works of St. Hilary in Ante-Nicene Library*, by Watson and Pullan, p. lxvi.

suggestions of this analogy in Greek Theology, and it has recently been revived by Christian thinkers, not only out of deference to a prevalent philosophical tendency, but still more in the interest of a full affirmation of the divinity of our Lord. The attempt to conceive the Godhead as a perfectly unified society will doubtless be pushed still further and promises an interesting chapter in speculative Theology. The root idea of this line of thought is that God is not a personal unity but a unity of persons, and the heresy to which it inclines is that of Tritheism.

It is not my purpose here to discuss the respective merits of these two methods of conceiving the Trinity, nor do I wish to deny that they may be reconciled with one another. The course of our argument will probably lead us to conclude that the Augustinian analogy is more adequate than its rival. But the point which interests us here is simply the possibility of the two views. It can hardly be questioned that a theory of the nature of the Godhead may be held which, while essentially orthodox and preserving all the interests of Christian devotion, could not describe God as a person. It behoves us, therefore, to refrain from staking the validity of Christian Theism on the truth of a proposition which is not in fact necessarily involved in it. It is not necessary to defend the thesis that God is a person. What we must defend is the proposition that God is personal.

It scarcely needs to be remarked that we shall be voyaging in the dark unless at the outset of our dis-

cussion we attach some definite significance to the term "personality." The history of the word and the development of the concept have been traced by Professor Clement Webb in his recent Gifford Lectures, with valuable results for the student of Christian doctrine; but the main point as it seems to me for our present purpose is not historical: we are primarily concerned with the definition of that type of being with whom personal relations would be possible. Now there are two methods of approaching this question which will suggest themselves at once. At first sight it seems obvious that we ought to begin with an analysis of personality into its component parts. Setting out, for example, with the definition given by Locke, "a thinking, intelligent being, that has reason and reflection, and can consider itself as itself, the same thinking thing in different times and places."[1] We might investigate the adequacy of this definition, and then proceed to ask whether it, or some other definition to which we might be led, could without contradiction be said to include the being of God. A grave danger, however, lurks in this method, and its application may lead us to a false conception of the nature of personality and its place in the order of Reality. It is a familiar truth that analysis, followed by synthesis, does not give us a genuine understanding of a living and concrete whole. Nowhere is this caution more important than when we are dealing with individuality. Personality in

[1] *Essay*, II. chap. xxvii. f. 11.

fact is not merely the juxtaposition of thinking and self-consciousness with perception and feeling, nor is the meaning which we attach to the word to be exhausted by a synthesis of these elements. The opposite is the case. We know these mental functions as personal activities. We do not apprehend memory and will in abstraction; we apprehend them as aspects of that one life which we call personal. To proceed, then, merely by analysis and synthesis obscures the originality and indefeasible unity of that which we are professing to define.

On the other hand, we have the claim that personality is indefinable, that it is entirely incapable of analysis, and that we have an intuition beyond which it is impossible to push our inquiry. "This personality," says Mansel, "like all other simple and immediate presentations, is indefinable . . . it can be analysed into no simple elements; for it is revealed to us in all the clearness of an original intuition." [1] This claim, however, cannot be accepted if it is meant to exclude the necessity of a psychological investigation of the development of the concept of the self. It is evident that we do not reach the idea of personality at a blow, and though it may really be indefinable, it cannot be taken altogether out of the sphere of research. "The fact is that a concept, logically simple and immediate in such wise as to be underivable from others and therefore indefinable, may be—

[1] *Metaphysics*, p. 182, quoted by Ward, *Principles of Psychology*, p. 363 *n.*; see the whole of this note.

we might almost say will be—psychologically the result of a long process of development." [1] But there is nevertheless a profound truth in the assertion that personality is ultimately undefinable, for we discover that, when we attempt to analyse the self, we are brought to a point where we are compelled to recognise an ultimate and unanalysable datum.

The central fact about personality is that it is built up round a centre of consciousness. The reaction against the old doctrines of the self as substance has led many modern psychologists to the view that this active centre, this transcendental ego, indefinable and ultimate subject of experience, can be dispensed with, and that the self may be thought of as the sum of the presentations, feelings, and thoughts; in other words, that "thoughts are the thinkers," and that we need not go behind them for any explanation of the unity of the self. This theory, however, in all its forms misinterprets the essential fact of experience. Feelings and volitions in the abstract are nothing at all. What we mean when we speak of them is that some individual is feeling or willing, and however much the idea of the self as subject may be denied in words, it is implicitly assumed in all thought about conscious experience. As Professor Ward has said at the conclusion of his great chapter on the "Presentation of Self," "Psychology without a soul —as the 'rational psychologists' described soul—is quite possible, but not psychology without a self, a

[1] Ward, *op. cit.* p. 363.

being that in its acquaintance and intercourse with objects—that is, directly or indirectly with other selves—feels and acts. Let the substantiality of this being be interpreted as it may, the actuality of it is past question and therefore never questioned." [1]

We have here a very important fact about the Universe. If it be true that an analysis of consciousness leads to an ultimate datum, an original and unanalysable fact, we have good ground for believing that here we are in touch with something which is of the very stuff of reality. "The unity of consciousness is implied by every process by which we imagine it to be constructed; therefore it is primitive and original." [2] When we are looking for a firm basis for our philosophy, there is surely one which cannot seriously be questioned. It is that, whatever else the Universe may be, it is presented and experienced in an indefinite number of centres, and that these centres, however much their experiences may resemble one another, are in themselves distinct, having each a life of its own. There is surely no more indubitable thing which can be said about the world than this—and nothing more significant. Moreover, it is worth while to ask, Whence, except from the experience of a conscious centre, does philosophy get the concept of "reality." That I am real I cannot doubt; that you are real in the same sense I shall, unless I am insane, admit; but to speak of anything more real

[1] *Psychological Principles*, pp. 381-2.
[2] Varisco, *Know Thyself*, p. 37.

is to use words of comparison where comparison is not possible.

If we may take this fact for granted we may go on to state some further facts about these centres, facts which have an air of truism but are none the less worthy of attention. It is clear that all centres are not on the same level of development. The experience which is possessed by them differs in complexity, range, and value. They may be arranged in a series, which beginning from the very lowest form of sentiency, passes upwards to the highest examples of self-conscious personality. It is possible that the speculation of Leibniz may be true, and that there is no real being which is not of this kind, "external reality" may be "an aggregate of other subjects."[1] Nature, at the lower limit, may be merely that part of the series which is so rudimentary as to escape our detection of its continuity with our own nature; while beyond the level at which our personalities live there may be other and higher centres of the same kind. Such a view has certainly not been rendered more untenable by the advance of scientific knowledge which appears to be resolving the concept of matter into some form of energy. But even if we find ourselves unable to forgo the conception of an inorganic nature, a world of matter essentially different from the worlds of life and mind, it cannot be denied that this hierarchy of centres of experience exists. If we hesitate to allow that it is

[1] Varisco, *op. cit.* p. 114.

the only fact about the world, we must admit that it is the most important.

Another doctrine which was held by Leibniz may be said to have at least a partial justification in experience. According to the father of modern pluralism each monad differs from all others and, by the principle of the "identity of indiscernibles," without this difference would have no separate existence. But, on the other hand, by the principle of continuity, the monads may be arranged in an infinite series, each member of which differs from its neighbours by the least possible degree.[1] We should be going beyond the bounds of the obvious if we accepted the view that there are no real gaps in nature, and that the appearance of "jumps" in the scale is an illusion, as Leibniz thought, brought about in the interests of the beauty of the Universe. Nevertheless, the ascending scale is a fact: and the important point for us to notice is that personality is a name which applies to one segment of the scale. The worm, the dog, and the child may represent typical stopping-places. The worm is, we might say, a centre of sentiency, but clearly not a self. The dog is more than a centre of sentiency, but only doubtfully described as a self; while the child may claim without contradiction the dignity of selfhood. The important fact which these very trite observations are intended to bring out is that we are dealing with

[1] *Monadology*, § 8; *Principles of Nature and Grace*, § 4; cf. Latta's *Introduction*, pp. 36-40.

a series that rises, at least in many of its segments and possibly in all, by imperceptible gradations. Our words are not applicable to certain definite and clearly marked classes of objects, their denotation is not sharply delimited. Always, at the limit, there are border cases which must cause us to hesitate in the process of naming. An essential fact about personality is that it is the description of the higher steps in the ascending scale. "No man can analyse or synthesise the Divine Being. No man can put together the elements of being and say, So much makes a man; so much more makes an angel; and now by so much more a God begins; and at length, such and such elements make a full and complete divinity."[1] This is true of the whole scale of being. It is never really possible to explain the higher type as the lower with the addition of a new element. Nor, on the other hand, is it possible to fix a point and say, Here the new type of existence begins to be. There is real newness, a fresh creation, which is more and different from the reshuffling of already existing material; but there is genuine continuity as well, so that the emergence of newness is no sudden *coup* which might call attention to the cosmic dramatist, but the creative energy does good by stealth and brings its new birth to light as it were with shy circumspection. Personality, then, we may say, means those centres which are more than selves; but if we are asked to draw a clear line between selves

[1] Henry Ward Beecher, *Sermon on the Incarnation.*

and persons we have to confess that we are baffled. Personality cannot be defined in any strict sense, because it cannot be completely analysed. It escapes analysis, not because it is unreal, but on the contrary because it is the highest manifestation of that which is most genuinely and ultimately real.

Nevertheless it is still possible to notice the conditions under which personality occurs, and the circumstances which lead us to predicate personality of a conscious centre. In the first place, we cannot call that centre personal which is below the level of self-consciousness. To be personal a self must not only know and feel and will, but know that it knows and feels and wills. It must possess that mysterious power of presenting itself as an object, of forming a concept of its own character. But the possession of self-consciousness is not the sufficient title to the dignity of personality. There are selves, such as children who have attained some degree of self-consciousness who yet would be but doubtfully described as persons. For full personality we demand that self-consciousness should have reached that higher development which we call conscience: and this brings us to the second and most important characteristic of personality. The part played in the history of the concept of personality by legal and forensic ideas has frequently been pointed out, but it would be a mistake to suppose that personality is in any sense a legal fiction. It acquires definite connotation in the sphere of "claims and counter-claims"

with which the law is concerned, but it belongs to that order of ideas which lies behind law—the ethical.[1] Personality throughout is intimately connected with social life. We should not think of applying the name to cases which are too primitive to allow of social relations. And further, the evolution of self-consciousness is conditioned by social experience. "I am consciously myself by the contrast between my inner life as I feel it, and the inner life of somebody else whose existence I believe in and whose life I set over against mine."[2] And again, it is in the attainment of "reflective social consciousness"[3] that the self most clearly strides over that imaginary boundary that divides it from personality. The adoption of an ideal is the unifying principle in the life of the person which endows it with a coherence and self-identity which mark it off from all other kinds of conscious centre. "By my ideal I learn to know myself as one self with one contrast that runs through all the endlessly varying contrasts of ego and non-ego."[4] The demand which we make of a self before we can admit its claim to the rank of person is that it may be regarded as responsible, as having the capacity to be directed by principles, as possessing that coherence of action which arises from the conscious pursuit of an end. To put the same idea in another way: we may agree that a person differs from a self in that it

[1] Cf. Royce, *The Conception of God*, p. 258.
[2] Royce, *op. cit.* pp. 278, 279.
[3] Ward, *Psychological Principles*, p. 372.
[4] Royce, *op. cit.* p. 282.

expresses a more definite meaning, as we say, it "stands for something" in the world. Contrasted with the simpler and relatively external activity of a self, a person is a more coherent unity, developing its life from within.

Let us now endeavour to sum up this very imperfect attempt to describe what we mean by "person." First we have found that the basis on which personality is built is self-consciousness. Though it would be false to make self-consciousness the sole characteristic of personality as Locke appears to do, we could not conceive that personality should exist below that level. Secondly, personality requires the presence of a guiding ideal; it is, to borrow a phrase of Professor Pringle-Pattison's, "formed will." That is the condition on which the coherence and meaning of the person depend. We should not, it is true, withhold the title from individuals, many of whose actions and desires were irreconcilable with any ideal aim, in whose life a definite meaning was very imperfectly expressed; but we should require that degree of unity and meaning which arises from the possession of an ideal end. Nor is it necessary that the ideal end should be wholly good. The ideal of a person like Napoleon I. was certainly largely evil, yet we should not hesitate to say that he was an outstanding example of personality. It seems that there may be ideals which are partly bad but which may serve, up to a point at least, as conditions of personal unity. Thirdly, it is clear from what has already been said,

that personality is a relative concept. Just as the passage from a centre of sentiency to a self is gradual, admitting no clear-cut boundary, so, too, the passage from self to person. The demand for complete coherence, for the unambiguous expression of meaning, is one which none of us can fully meet. There remain in all of us wide tracts of thought and conduct not yet brought into a coherent whole by the dominance of an ideal purpose. We shall make a fatal mistake, therefore, if we suppose that the full meaning of personality is exhausted by the lives that are our own. Personality is not a possession which we inherit. It is an ultimate achievement, the ideal limit of our progress. We are not fully persons, but we are, we may hope, becoming persons; and, in that process of becoming, we may find indications of what full personality would be.

II

We are now perhaps in a position to attack the question whether we can legitimately regard God as personal. I think it will be convenient to state in a summary manner the positive grounds for holding this belief, and to deal more at length with some of the serious difficulties which are raised, since the real crux of the problem is the possibility of attributing personality to God without involving ourselves in hopeless contradiction.

The fundamental justification for the assertion that God is personal is disclosed when we ask what

sense must we give to the word "exists," when the religious consciousness affirms the existence of the Deity? Attention has recently been directed on the various kinds of existence or being by Mr. Russell and Professor Alexander and other writers of the same tendency.[1] We need not concern ourselves here with the very complex problems which arise in connection with the being of relations and abstract universals, but may confine ourselves to three possible meanings. (1) God might be thought to exist in the same sense as a "thing" exists, *i.e.* as a part of the relatively passive world of perception. We need not, however, spend any time upon considering this possibility, for no religion higher than Fetishism would regard any object of this nature as worthy of the name of God, and, moreover, even Fetishism would reverence an object not as such, but as the vehicle of some power or activity.

(2) The assertion is, however, frequently intended to imply that God exists as a "concrete universal," which is really equivalent to the general order of the universe. As we have already admitted, a genuine religious life may be compatible with this type of belief about God. But it may be argued that the theology which has depersonalised God and substituted the conception of a *Deus* who is not different from *Natura*, has in its devotional aspects allowed the imagination to repair the devastations of logic and

[1] Cf. Miss Stebbing's paper, "The Philosophical Significance of the Verb To Be," in *Proceedings of Aristotelian Society*, 1917–18.

has in prayer and aspiration thought of God as personal. "Everywhere our conception of Religion seems to include a certain 'warmth and intimacy' which we associate with such experiences as we call emphatically *personal*."[1] For religious experience God is not primarily the All but the Highest.

(3) The sense which religion attaches to the word is clearly not essentially different from that which I intend when I say "I exist." As we have already argued, this is the only kind of existence we can really understand, all other types of being and affirmations of reality derive their meaning from the experience of ourselves as centres of knowledge and activity. The God to whom the religious man prays has no lower type of reality than this. He is more than any sum or arrangement of the elements of being. If Reality has, at least as one of its characteristics, centres of consciousness, God is, if we may so speak, one of them.

The question must then arise what kind of centre must we suppose God to be? Here the presuppositions with which we undertake to interpret the world must speak the final word. Confronted with the question whether we shall take the undeveloped or the developed centre as our guiding thought, whether we shall think of God as resembling the worm or the person, we must fall back on our estimate of the importance of values for philosophy. If we regard them as "epiphenomena," as having no

[1] Webb, *Divine Personality*, vol. ii. p. 191.

foundation in the structure of the Universe, we shall find no difficulty in conceiving Reality as analogous to the undifferentiated sentiency of the lower centres. If, on the contrary, we assume that the scale of value is also the scale of significance, there can be no doubt that we must choose personality as our description of the Divine.

If we may refer once more to our argument from the Moral Consciousness we may recall that more than one line of thought appeared to lead to a personal Deity. The postulate of the objectivity of the moral ideal, that it should be independent of our or any one's conception or preference, could, we found, best be satisfied by the supposition of a mind which, distinguishing itself from the finite world of moral striving, could grasp the moral ideal in all its complexity. The attainment of the ultimate Social Good required the conception of a perfected intercourse which we found was only conceivable on the supposition that there was a personal Focus of Spirits through whom that intercourse could be realised. It may be said that our ethical, no less than our religious, interests require us to hold the personality of God.

But doubtless the real point at issue is, Can this belief be held when we work out its implications? Probably few would be inclined to question that our highest interests and our best hopes would be safest if we could believe that there was a personal Deity; and even the most determined philosopher might be

prepared to confess that the world becomes cold and unfriendly to our hearts when we seriously entertain the idea that there is no personality higher than human persons guiding the course of the world and willing to enter into relations of friendship and communion with us. The hesitation which we feel in ascribing personality to the Divine is not due to the fact that we do not feel that it is eminently desirable that God should be personal, nor because there are no reasons for affirming that He is personal, but because of some obvious difficulties which in various forms present themselves to philosophers, theologians, and common men. It is to these problems that we must now turn our attention.

III

A common accusation against personal Theism is that it is anthropomorphic. It is difficult to say precisely what those who make this accusation really mean by it, but I suppose that the suggestion is that Theism is a survival from a more childlike period of thought in which the powers and experiences of human beings were called in without much modification to explain the phenomena of the world. And it may be argued that, just as physical science has left behind these crudities and has developed a system of abstract laws, so philosophy may be expected, as it advances from the childlike naïveté of its beginning, to rise above the conception of a personal God to the idea of an impersonal Absolute. And further, it may

be said, the idea of a personal deity is out of harmony with the vastness of the universe and its mysterious complexity. To speak of God as personal might have been possible before the world had been revealed to us in its infinite reach. But now we cannot think that the Universe is created and ruled by one who is like unto ourselves. Now there is a great deal of truth in this state of mind. It is a besetting sin of those who speak in the name of religion to forget the mysterious depths of the universe and to hold language which implies that the world is hardly more enigmatic than a well-ordered parish. And, further, it is obvious that in one sense the charge of anthropomorphism cannot be denied. We do frame our conception of personality out of our human experience, and in thinking of God as personal we are carrying on that strain of religious development which, as we saw, interpreted the divine in terms of human life.

But let us not be misled by rhetoric. I should entirely deny that we were substituting a higher conception of reality for a lower one if we passed from the idea of a personal God to that of an impersonal Absolute. On the contrary, however much we may disguise our proceeding with vague eloquence, we are really supposing that Reality is something lower than the highest that we know. It is precisely because we find personality to be the highest form of that which really exists that we are constrained to think of Reality itself as person. There are in

fact two kinds of anthropomorphism. It would be a grave error if we should argue that God must be a person precisely like ourselves, ignorant, vacillating, incoherent, evil. That would be inexcusable anthropomorphism. But this is not what we have contended. We have urged that personality as it exists in us is imperfect, a rudimentary stage pointing to a higher development; and the personality which we have attributed to God is that perfection of personality which is only adumbrated in ourselves. We are not making God in our image, but in the image of our ideal; we are thinking of Him as fulfilling the highest possibilities at which our nature dimly hints. To make this kind of anthropomorphism a reproach is hardly reasonable. For all thought must be conditioned by the experience and nature of the thinker. To try to find concepts which are not, in some sense, human, is like the attempt to jump out of one's skin. We cannot use categories which we do not possess nor measure the world with any instrument but our own intelligence. Our thinking must be anthropomorphic because we are men. But I do not wish to deny that there are some concepts which retain less of the purely human than others. These concepts are, however, the abstract concepts. They have lost many of the traces of their origin by their attenuation. Their relative distance from anthropomorphism is no mark of their adequacy as descriptions of the Absolute. When we are looking for a term to denote the Supreme Reality we

must be anthropomorphic, for we need the concept which is most concrete, and that is the concept of personality.

The difficulties of a more definite character which may be urged against the conception of the Supreme Reality as personal turn on the alleged impossibility of conceiving the conditions of personality fulfilled except in our imperfect and limited being. It is argued that if we think away those circumstances which cannot be supposed to attach to the Divine Being we have also thought away the very meaning of personality and shall be driven to the thought of an Absolute Experience which we may call, if we like, super-personal, but which is certainly not adequately described as personal. We have already accepted the view that God is super-personal in the sense that He must be thought of as personal in a higher and completer sense than any human individual. We, are, however, deeply interested in securing that the phrase "super-personal" should mean "truly personal" and should not be a polite circumlocution for "impersonal." It will be necessary, therefore, if we are to meet this objection, to show that the characteristics of personality as we know it may be represented in a perfect manner in the Supreme Reality without passing over into something else.

The most general form in which the difficulty may be stated is that personality involves a "fissure," a "cleavage," an ultimate division which cannot be

supposed to inhere in the Absolute, and that, in short, a Personal God will not provide us with that complete and harmonious unity which must characterise Reality. We may reply in general to this that the kind of unity which any philosophy which cares to keep in touch with common sense will seek is one which does not "annul" or "abolish" the concrete existences of finite experience. It will not be a unity in which everything fades into everything else, but a multiplicity in unity, a coherent whole consisting of diverse elements. Now we have already admitted and deplored the fact that personality, as we know it, is not such a coherent unity. Nevertheless it is the nearest approach to this unity of diverse elements with which we are acquainted. In our personal life we have some experience of the bringing together of diverse elements into a coherent whole. It is the nature of personality to be a unity of plurality, a πλῆθος ἕν.[1] And this coherence is capable of indefinite extension. We can conceive our lives as more completely dominated by an ideal purpose, and so reaching an ever larger and richer unity. If, then, we think of this process carried to its limit, become complete, we have reached the conception of a true or perfect personality, and at the same time of a unity which is able to comprehend within itself an infinitely diverse material.

But, it may be said, the dualism which vitiates the claim of personality to ultimate reality resides in

[1] Plotinus, *Enn.* vi. 2.

the very nature of the personal life. The person must distinguish itself from an object. It must forever be opposed to a not-self, and, if this not-self is removed, then the form of selfhood is abolished. It is of course true that finite personality, as we have noticed, develops in a social medium and comes into possession of its nature and into consciousness of its being through contrast and co-operation with the social environment. But it would be unwarrantable to make the historical conditions of the evolution of finite self-hood a part of the nature of the self. As Lotze has argued, the gradual development of the self is a mark of the imperfection of the self. There is no contradiction in the conception of a perfect personality which did not go through this process. On the contrary, it is involved in the conception of a perfect personality that it should not do so. But the problem is more serious when we turn to the fact of self-consciousness. It must be confessed that we should not regard any being as personal who did not possess this characteristic, and it may be argued that this distinction, the self as subject and the self as object, destroys the unity, and convicts the conception of ultimate inadequacy.

The problem of how self-knowledge is possible is one of the most intricate with which psychology has to deal. The difficulty is simple enough. It is, in essentials, the apparent impossibility of the Knower ever becoming an object of knowledge for himself. What is the relation between the "I" and the "me"

and how can I be sure that the "me" that I know is in any sense my real self? And in fact it is very clear that the self which we know is actually far from being the real self. The justification for holding that our self-knowledge is not wholly false lies in the fact that the "me" has not been entirely moulded by external conditions, but has been constructed, at least in some degree, by the activity of the Ego. "All has depended not alone on what was 'given' to the self but also on what it has itself done."[1] We have to admit then that the "I" and the "me" cannot be identical with one another; but at the same time they cannot be dissevered. They must exist in an indissoluble unity. The subject is always "immanent in experience," and yet without the experience the subject cannot exist. We have further to notice that the condition of self-consciousness is only imperfectly fulfilled in finite personalities. The self-knowledge of the finite person is limited and conditioned by the given objective world with which it is in contact. "The outward advance that becomes an inward revealing" does not lead to a perfect revealing, because the outward advance is checked and confined by external arrangements which are relatively impervious to its creative activity. But we can conceive a personality in which this limitation is taken away, one, that is, which "constructs" its objective self by an unimpeded movement; and such a conception would not be that of

[1] Ward, *Psychological Principles*, p. 381. See the whole section.

an impersonal reality but of a personality that had become complete. It is clear therefore that an infinite personality is not contradictory; so far from self-consciousness being an impossible attribute of God it appears that only in God is self-consciousness in a full sense possible: and we are brought once again to the point that personality in ourselves is an approximation only to the true meaning of personality. But though an approximation only and not the complete reality it is an analogy of the Absolute, for it contains, along with the marks of its own imperfection, clear indications of the nature of that Being who is completely personal. We must notice, too, that the doctrine of the Trinity is in no sense opposed to the idea of the personality of God, but rather is an implication of the Divine Selfhood. God cannot be self-conscious, He cannot possess that awareness of His own being which is a necessary element of personality, unless there are distinctions within the Divine unity: and the Divine self-knowledge is perfect because in it alone is the Me, the "Word," "of one substance" with the Ego, the perfect and complete expression of the Divine Selfhood.[1]

It would, however, be unduly optimistic to suppose that we had now entirely overcome the difficulty raised by the alleged necessity of a "not-self." Though it is true that the concept of personality gives us the most complete instance of unity in

[1] Cf. Aquinas, *Summa*, i. qu. xxxiv.-xxxvi.; and Inge, *Philosophy of Plotinus*, vol. ii. pp. 209-10.

diversity, and though it is clear that there is no insuperable difficulty in understanding what self-consciousness may mean in the Divine nature, yet when we go on to consider the further characteristics of personality we find the same perplexity breaking out in a particularly embarrassing form. We have seen reason to believe that personality is an ethical concept, and that the coherence of a personality depends upon the dominance in its activity of an ideal purpose. We have already had occasion to discuss the meaning of an ideal and the mode of its existence, and we need not here stay to inquire whether "ideal" may in some sense be thought of as completely different from "purpose." It is, at any rate, clear that the "ideal" of which we speak when we refer to it as a necessary condition of personal life is essentially a purpose. The pursuit of an ideal end unifies the life of the self and raises it to the level of personality. In this case at least it seems impossible to separate the idea from the notion of a contrast. There must be an idea of the end held over against a discrepant actuality. If there were no such contrast the dynamic unity of personality must give place to a static unity, to which we could hardly give the name "person."

The difficulty is only too obvious. In what sense can God be said to have an ideal? The question is vital; for if He cannot be said to have an ideal in any sense analogous to that in which we may have an ideal, it is not legitimate, if our account of

personality is correct, to describe Him as personal. At first sight, a resort to the social theory of the Trinity might appear to offer a way of escape from this dilemma, and we might perhaps imagine that one Person of the Divine Society seeks to realise his ideal in and through the other Persons. But a little reflection is sufficient to show that the escape is illusory. It would certainly be impious from the standpoint of religious sentiment to regard one Person within the Godhead as imperfect, and we may remember that when we were dealing with the self-consciousness of the Divine Being we were led to the conviction that " discrepancy " must be absent. But in any case, so soon as we admit imperfection of an ethical kind within the Godhead we destroy the Godhead. If we may so speak, that member of the Divine Society who is imperfect is *ipso facto* not divine and therefore not a member of the Divine Society. It has been irreverently suggested that some doctrines of the Trinity represent the Deity as a mutual admiration society; we shall not mend matters if we represent the Trinity as a mutual improvement society.

That distinguished and profoundly religious thinker Josiah Royce, whose death has been a grievous loss to philosophy and literature, spent much subtle and penetrating thought on the problem which is now before us. It was his constant aim to find some way of reconciling a thoroughgoing Monism with an ethical and personal conception of the Absolute.

Most of his readers will, I think, confess that he did not succeed in reaching any final solution; and the cause of his failure may perhaps throw some light on the way which we must take if we would find any way out of the impasse. Royce held, in opposition to most Absolute Idealists, that the temporal and finite order has real being; he refused to indulge in mystical language which implies that this order is in any sense abolished in the Eternal Order. The Absolute Experience, so he taught, includes all the experiences of the finite centres in an immediate present, an "eternal now." Royce contends that the finite individuals have real being and a real activity and freedom. Nevertheless his Monism compels him to hold that, whatever be the nature of my will, it is always "God who wills in me." It is consequently not surprising that he is constrained to give a somewhat unnatural meaning to freedom and activity. There can be, on his view, no real independence of the finite centres, and the only meaning which he can attach to my freedom is that my act is not elsewhere repeated in the Divine Consciousness. The problem of freedom is the same as the problem of finite individuality.[1]

I think it needs little argument that Royce's view will not provide us with that "discrepant actuality" against which the Divine Ideal must be held. A temporal order in which all will without exception is God willing, which as a whole is already the realisation

[1] *The World and the Individual*, vol. ii.; cf. esp. pp. 135 and 141 ff. 467 ff.

of the Divine Purpose, leaves no room for that dynamic element which appears to be essential for personality. It is indeed doubtful if we can speak in any intelligible sense, of a will where there is nothing analogous to a temporal process. An eternal will in the sense of a will which always wills the same end is intelligible, and is the common man's idea of the will of God; but a timeless will is hardly intelligible because it negates a condition without which will cannot exist. It is evident, then, that Royce has not really succeeded in escaping from the charmed circle of Absolute Idealism in which all that is stands frozen into immobility. He has not escaped because he has not spoken the magic word, or at least has not uttered it with power. Creation is the concept which we need. It is that alone which will deliver us from the impasse. If we can admit that God has created a world of free spirits, whose wills may, and in fact do, turn against the Divine Will and oppose themselves to God's purpose, we have that "discrepant actuality" over against which the Divine Ideal is held. God's ideal, the purpose we may reverently say, which gives His life that coherence without which it could not be personal, is the achievement by the created selves of that Good which He has prepared for them.

It would be foolish to attempt to disguise the enormous difficulties which are raised by such a conception. The central dilemma of Theism is here presented to us in its most formidable guise. It is

really the ancient problem of reconciling our belief in the infinity and omnipotence of God on the one hand with the belief in real freedom, real progress, real newness on the other. I shall not be tempted at the end of a lecture to embark on a discussion of the recent proposals to say frankly that God is limited, greatly as they would repay investigation. But I will confess that it seems to me that any view, such as that which is so lucidly and powerfully presented by Dr. Rashdall, which can still be called Theistic will still have this problem to face. No Theism and certainly no Christian Theism could abandon the faith that every part and aspect of the world is ultimately dependent upon God. It may be that "infinity" is a misleading term, and it is certainly true that the word "omnipotence" needs careful definition; but any conception of God which can be accepted by a complete religious experience must include the thought that God is the ultimate Source and Ground of all that is, the First Cause as well as the End of every element of being.[1] And yet, on the other hand, the interests of our moral life, the hope of any solution of the mystery of evil, the possibility of thinking of God as personal, all depend on our being able to maintain that created selves, finite centres, have a relative independence.

[1] On Omnipotence cf. Ward, *Realm of Ends*, p. 353 f.

LECTURE VI

THE IDEA OF CREATION

We have to discuss to-day the meaning and validity of the idea of creation; and it may be well to recall the reasons which have led us to attach great importance to this element in the Christian faith. We have urged that Christianity has been characterised by a special form of religious experience, and that this experience has brought with it and implied a characteristic view of the world, a philosophy in short, which has not infrequently been obscured by the laborious subtleties of theologians, but which is nevertheless patent in the general movement of the Christian consciousness. The religious experience is that of communion with God. For Christian piety the highest good is not absorption into the Divine life, still less is it devotion to a baffled leader of the hard-pressed forces of the Ideal; it is an unbroken fellowship with a personal God who is the source of the soul's life, but never identical with the soul. Thus the Christian view of the world is deeply concerned to maintain the personal nature of God and the real freedom of finite spirits. It cannot be

content with an Absolute of which it may be said that personality is merely a less inadequate symbol than some others, nor can it be satisfied with the thought that the Kingdom of God is a stage on the journey to some higher good in which King, Kingdom, and members are "transmuted" into some other type of being. The need for a concept of creation, then, stands out clearly, both from the point of view of man's vocation and highest good and from that of the nature of God. On the one hand, it is necessary to affirm the relative independence of human selves and the real significance of action and choice and of history. On the other hand, creation seems no less necessary for the belief in the true personality of God. If we may affirm that personality is an ethical concept, and depends upon the possession of an ideal purpose, we are compelled to postulate some sphere in which the purpose of God may have its expression; in other words, we are led to the idea of a created order. It would be hardly too much to say that the conception of creation in some form is a vital element in Christian Theism. If we should be compelled to abandon it under the pressure of criticism we should be left to a melancholy choice between a Pantheism for which there is no world and a Pluralism for which there is no God.

I

Like most of the leading ideas of theology, that of creation has been entangled with notions which are

not essential to it, and it is necessary to ask ourselves what we fundamentally and essentially mean by the creation of a world. Stripping the idea of the accretions which mythology and speculation have woven round it, we must seek to see it in its barest and most irreducible simplicity.

The explicit affirmation of an absolute creation is not to be found in the Old Testament. The classical passages of Genesis suggest the idea of a pre-existing chaos into which the Divine Spirit brings order. This dualistic notion is not, however, the final or the highest development of Hebrew thought on the subject. In the later prophetic writings there are frequent examples of modes of expression which exclude any possibility of any kind of existence which is not the product of the creative activity of God. "I am Jehovah and there is none else. I form the light and create darkness; I make peace and create evil; I am Jehovah that doeth all these things." [1] Yet even here the conception of an absolute creation is implicit. It has not reached the stage of clear definition.

The idea of absolute creation, which is implicit in the highest teaching of the Hebrew Prophets, is entirely absent from the philosophical reflection of the Greeks. Mythology gives place to philosophy; but the problem which is before the mind of Anaximander and Plato is the same as that with which the ancient tales, in their childlike fashion, attempted to grapple. It is to explain the temporal

[1] Isaiah xlv. 6, 7.

order, to give some account of events. The idea of a primordial chaos, which was a staple element in myth, passes over, in another form, into the philosophical construction of the great thinkers of antiquity.[1] "The notion of absolute creation is unknown to Plato as it is to all Grecian and Roman antiquity."[2] The *Timaeus* contains some of the greatest sayings on the subject of creation which have ever been uttered. "Let me tell you, then, why the Creator made this world of generation. He was good, and the good cannot have jealousy of anything. And being free from jealousy, he desired that all things should be as like himself as they could be."[3] But the conception remains ultimately dualistic. The Demiurgus is not primarily a creator, but a constructor. His activity is limited by *ἀνάγκη*, which is an opposing inertia in the nature of things, independent and not wholly pervious to the creative mind. "The creation of the world is the impression of order on a previously existing chaos. The formula of Anaxagoras—"all things were in chaos or confusion, and then mind came and disposed them"—is a summary of the first part of the *Timaeus*.[4] The later Platonism is perhaps not open to the charge that it teaches a subtle dualism, for in the system of Plotinus the whole of existence in its various gradations proceeds by emanation from the One. Creation is like

[1] Cf. Windelband, *History of Ancient Philosophy*, pp. 39 ff
[2] Brandis quoted Grote, *Plato*, iii. p. 248.
[3] *Timaeus* 29 D, Jowett.
[4] Jowett, *Introduction to Timaeus*, p. 427.

the outflow of light from the sun,[1] the necessary consequence of the Divine nature. Thus, though Plotinus does not definitely assert a creation "out of nothing," his principles would clearly lead to the conclusion that there can be nothing which is not, in its measure, the expression of the supreme Reality. Nevertheless the method of this process of emanation and the consequent status of finite existences preclude us from regarding Plotinus's doctrine as one of creation in the strict sense. The world of spirit and life is the "by-play of contemplation" (*παίρεργον θεωρίας*): it is the outcome of that tendency in all things to contemplate that which is higher.[2] The world is, therefore, not the result of will or of any activity analogous to will, but proceeds from the One by a kind of natural necessity.

We have to observe, then, that the explicit affirmation of a creation *ex nihilo* appears to have been a peculiarity of Christian thought. It is only in Christian theology that we find the clear renunciation of dualism, together with the belief that all things proceed from God by an act of will. Probably the earliest statement of this conception in a definite form is to be found in Irenaeus, and it is instructive to notice that he is led to this doctrine by his opposition to the dualistic theories of the Gnostics. "They (the Gnostics) do not believe that God, being powerful and rich in all resources, created matter itself,

[1] *Enn.* vi. 7. 23.
[2] Inge, *Philosophy of Plotinus*, ii. 179.

inasmuch as they know not how much a spiritual and divine essence can accomplish. . . . For, to attribute the substance of created things to the power and will of Him who is God of all, is worthy both of credit and acceptance. It is also agreeable to reason, and there may be well said regarding such a belief, that 'the things which are impossible with men are possible with God.' While men indeed cannot make anything out of nothing, but only out of matter already existing, yet God is in this point pre-eminently superior to men, that He Himself called into being the substance of His creation, when previously it had no existence." [1] In Augustine the conception of absolute creation, a creation "out of nothing," forms an integral part of his system. It is interesting to observe that here again the motive for the adoption of the idea is the necessity to combat dualism. The Manichaean view of the world was a thoroughgoing dualism. God, according to its doctrine, creates the universe out of a material which is inherently evil. In opposition to this, Augustine declares that the universe is made by God "out of nothing." There is no independent material, no part or element of being which does not owe its existence to the Creator. The fact of creation out of nothing is the cause of the mutability of finite things and also of the possibility of evil. It must be confessed that this method of dealing with the problem of evil has in it the suggestion of a subtle form of dualism. The "nothing"

[1] *Haer.* ii. 10. 3 and 4, Roberts and Rambaut.

out of which all things are made seems to assume a substantive existence of its own, and to approximate to the ἀνάγκη which limited the Platonic creator. But we are not concerned with the difficulties of the Augustinian theodicy. The point which is important for our purpose is that Augustine develops his doctrine of creation as an answer to the dualistic conceptions of his time. It is a means of safeguarding the dependence of all that has being on the will of God.[1]

It is clear, therefore, that the idea of absolute creation is fully developed only in Christian theology, and that the motive which lay behind its development was the feeling that religion could not tolerate the belief in any existence independent of God. It seems to me that a good deal of confusion has been caused by the supposition that the Christian doctrine of creation has some necessary connection with the early narratives of Genesis. This was natural in the infancy of criticism, but we may surely now frankly confess that the Christian idea of creation is, in fact, a protest against the dualistic conception which is involved in them. It is, at any rate, important to notice that the motive, the religious interest, behind the idea of creation, is the affirmation of the thoroughgoing dependence of all things upon God. And further, it is clear that this dependence is conceived to be of a special kind. Creation theories differ from theories of emanation precisely in this respect. Creation conceives the created world as depending

[1] The chief passages are given by Burton, *Problem of Evil*, pp. 1-26.

upon an activity which is at least analogous to will, it exists by reason of the choice of its Creator; emanation, on the other hand, conceives the world as proceeding from the Absolute by a species of necessity, whether that necessity be thought of as a natural or a logical one. I do not forget that Neo-Platonism regards contemplation as the purest and most intense form of activity; but, in effect, its doctrine is indistinguishable from the affirmation that the finite sphere is the outcome of a necessary process. In truth creation goes to the furthest limit in making God responsible for the world. If we held the theory of emanation we might believe that everything depended upon God and yet we might absolve Him, if we may so speak, from any responsibility for the character of that which is produced. Where there is no will there can be no blame: optimist and pessimist may argue, but they will not affect our estimate of God. But on the creation hypothesis we face the full consequences of our faith that all things depend upon God; He is responsible for the world because He has willed it, not indeed in its detail or so that every event may be traced directly to His will, but in principle and in general structure, in its mystery and terrible potentialities for good and evil, with its risks and its tragedy, its offer of triumph or shameful disaster, it has been chosen by Him. I cannot agree, then, with Professor Pringle-Pattison that "creation, if it is taken to mean anything akin to efficient causation, is totally unfitted to express

any relation that can exist between spirits." [1] I will heartily concur in the opinion that the description of God as the First Cause is barren if it stands alone, and that to think of human selves as merely "ejects" from the Divine, distinct and separate from their Source, is utterly to misconceive the place and dignity of men. But the phrase "partaker of the Divine Nature" alone is also misleading, and might be interpreted in a sense which would fatally minimise the real independence and self-possession of the finite spirit. Inadequate as "efficient causation" may be to denote the Divine activity, and obscure as the problem of the meaning of causation undoubtedly is, the conception that God is the Cause as well as the Ground of all existence appears to be a necessary part of the notion of creation. For it is here that creation and emanation differ. Emanation is compatible with Pantheism, and may think of the dependence of the finite person as analogous to that of a part on the whole. Creation is only compatible with Theism. "It is of the essence of Theism that God has given existence to finite beings so that they can stand in relation to him—alienated or reconciled." [2] Creation insists that the dependence of the creature, which it asserts no less than emanationism, shall be thought of as analogous to that which arises when effective will produces effects which without it would have been absent.

We may conclude, therefore, that the concept of

[1] *Idea of God*, p. 315. [2] Sorley, *Moral Values*, p. 494.

creation essentially means the affirmation of the thoroughgoing dependence of all existence upon God, together with the real freedom and being-for-self of finite selves. It distinguishes itself from Dualism, on the one hand, by its denial of any reality, power, or principle which is not ultimately derived from God, and from Emanationism, on the other, by its insistence upon the relative independence of finite spirits; and it secures, or attempts to secure, this combination of ideas, which are not at first sight agreeable with one another, by thinking of the divine activity under the form of will.

It is necessary, however, to ask if any further idea is involved in a doctrine of creation; and in particular we shall be compelled to consider the question of an absolute beginning in time. As is well known, traditional theology has on the whole treated this as an integral part of the notion of creation; but it is also sufficiently evident that a submission to what was supposed to be the teaching of Scripture in this matter has had a great deal to do with the decisions of theology on this subject. Thomas Aquinas confesses that authority alone impels him to admit a beginning in time. But the consensus, whatever may be its cause, is sufficiently wide to engage our respectful attention, and so careful and enlightened a modern theologian as Dr. T. B. Strong puts down "that the process occurred in time" as one of the two "ideas essential to the notion of creation." [1]

[1] *Manual of Theology*, pp. 191 ff.

I wish to maintain that an absolute beginning "in time" or "of time" (if we accept Augustine's emendation) is no part of the idea of creation as it has an interest for the religious consciousness, and that very weighty reasons exist for rejecting the idea that creation in time is conceivable. It is, I suppose, hardly necessary to point out that the denial of a temporal beginning of the universe is a different thing from the assertion of the co-eternity of matter with God or the assertion that any particular order or part of the universe is eternal. That limited systems, some of them of vast size, have a beginning in time is an obvious fact of experience; and there is every reason for believing that the system of which humanity forms a part has had a beginning and will have an end. Nor again can we doubt that time is real for God. As Martensen has well said, "The proposition, Time has no reality for God, is incompatible with creation and leads to acosmism. If time has no existence for God, creatures too, whose development takes place in time, have no existence for God."[1] What is, I think, inconceivable and without the support of any religious interest is the notion that there was a time when God did not create.

It has frequently been argued that there is some kind of logical contradiction involved in the conception of a beginning of creation, and Kant has stated the supposed difficulty in the antithesis of the First Antinomy of the Pure Reason. "On the above

[1] *Dogmatics*, E.T. p. 124.

assumption (that the world has a beginning) it follows that there must have been a time when the world did not exist, that is, a void time. But in a void time the origination of a thing is impossible; because no part of any such time contains a distinctive condition of being, in preference to that of non-being (whether the supposed thing originate of itself or by means of some other cause). Consequently many series of things may have a beginning in the world, but the world itself cannot have a beginning, and is therefore, in relation to past time, infinite."[1] We must notice, however, that the argument here is not really against creation as it is held on a theistic hypothesis, but is directed in fact against a view which would hold that there was a time when nothing existed. It proceeds on the assumption that the world includes God. But if the theistic hypothesis is accepted, we must distinguish between the world and God. The doctrine of creation in time does not assert that there was a "void" time or a time when "nothing existed," for there was no time when God did not exist. It asserts simply that there was a time when creative activity was not exercised, when God existed alone. If we reject the theistic hypothesis and refuse to distinguish between God and the created order, we shall undoubtedly be unable to think of creation without involving ourselves in contradiction; but the contradiction will be caused by our presupposition, and

[1] Meiklejohn's translation.

cannot be said to be inherent in the conception of a beginning of creation as such.

The difficulty about an absolute beginning in time appears to be of a psychological rather than a logical kind. St. Augustine tells a story of a man who replied to the question What was God doing before creation? that He was making a hell for the inquisitive.[1] The story illustrates more than the shifts to which men may be reduced by theological difficulties. It is surely impossible to think of the Deity as passing from a state of non-creative quiescence to one of creative activity without also conceiving a change in the very nature of God. Creation is not negligible even from the point of view of God; it is not a mere reflection of the divine nature which may appear and disappear without making the smallest difference to the Creator. Nor can we think of God as personal unless we think of Him as creative. To be active and self-expressive, to bring into objective existence entities which are relatively new, is a mark of personality and a character without which personality could not be predicated. We have, moreover, seen that the personality of God requires us to suppose the existence of a finite order which may stand over against, and in possible disharmony with, His will. Unless therefore we are willing to attribute to God a merely "interim" personality, a selfhood which begins with creation and ends with the consummation of the present order, we shall be compelled

[1] *Conf.* xi. 12.

to hold that the activity of creation is eternal. This is not the same thing as a doctrine of the eternity of matter, or of finite selves, or of any finite order; it is not incompatible with eschatology if the "end of the world" be taken to mean the consummation of a finite system and not the consummation of the whole universe. The conception which Origen developed in the dawn of Christian thought is analogous to that to which we have been led. "If the world had a beginning in time, what was God doing before the world began? For it is at once impious and absurd to say that the nature of God is inactive and immovable, or to suppose that goodness at one time did not do good and omnipotence did not at one time exercise its power. Such is the objection which they are accustomed to make to our statement that this world had its beginning at a certain time. . . . We can give a logical answer in accordance with the standard of religion when we say that not then for the first time did God begin to work when He made this visible world; but as, after its destruction, there will be another world, so also we believe that others existed before the present came into being. And both of these positions will be confirmed by the authority of holy Scripture. . . . By these testimonies it is established both that there were ages before our own, and that there will be others after it."[1]

We may now venture to conclude that an absolute beginning of creation is no part of the essential idea,

[1] *De Principiis*, iii. 5. 3, Crombie's translation.

and that, in fact, to include it as a necessary element is to burden ourselves with needless difficulties and to run the risk of obscuring the real issue. "The notion of creation involves a more essential point than the idea either of a beginning *in* time or a beginning *of* time. It involves the idea of God as the ground or support of the world—not merely its beginning—for without Him it could not at any moment exist." [1]

II

The problem of creation, therefore, is a special form of the old puzzle of the One and the many: it is the manner in which the dilemma between the all-absorbing claims of coherence and unity and the not less evident fact of multiplicity presents itself in the theistic hypothesis. We shall not have grappled with the real difficulty unless we can throw some light on the possibility of the coexistence of God and a world of relatively free spirits: but if we can do this the other questions which may arise in connection with creation may be dismissed as of minor importance. We have to reconcile belief in God and the thorough-going dependence of the temporal order with genuine though limited freedom and being-for-self of the higher elements in that order.

A complete solution of this antinomy is not to be looked for. Indeed it seems probable that we are here confronted with one of the necessary limitations

[1] Sorley, *Moral Values*, p. 467.

of our thought; and that our highest wisdom may be to accept both sides of the apparent opposition. Such an attitude of mind will be distasteful to those intellects which demand perfect coherence of the propositions which they accept; but in actual life this demand can never be completely satisfied, and it is not unreasonable to suppose that there must be some limit to the power of the finite mind to grasp the infinite. Such a limit, if it existed, would manifest itself in this kind of clash between two judgements, each of which is supported by grave and permanent considerations drawn from the facts of life and the higher experiences of mankind. We need not deny that truth is self-consistent, but we must not forget that it is also comprehensive, and in the search for truth it is sometimes necessary to choose between coherence and comprehensiveness. If it is possible to fall into error by being the victims of a contented muddle-headedness, it is also possible to be betrayed by a too facile logical consistency. Thus in dealing with the problem before us we may cut the knot by denying either God or the world: but our logical triumph will have been gained at a cost which no one is really prepared to pay, for, in the first case, we shall have condemned the whole of our spiritual life as irrational, and, in the second, we shall have reduced ourselves and the sphere of our striving and purpose and aspiration to a phantasmal unreality. Even though creation should remain an unrelieved enigma, it would still be more reasonable to accept

the doctrine and believe that its consistency was beyond our understanding than to embrace an opinion which would falsify the experience of life. But I am far from thinking that the position is so desperate as this. There is no reason why we should pretend that the problem is more obscure than it really is; and there are, in fact, some considerations which tend to suggest that the problem, though perhaps insoluble by us, is not insoluble *per se*, and indeed that the lines along which solution may be sought are not difficult to discover.

Let us begin by noticing the argument that the idea of creation is inherently contradictory and may be seen to be for ever incapable of being thought out in a coherent manner. It is alleged that the conception of an omnipotent personal God is self-evidently incompatible with the conception of free spirits, that the belief in a Creator who "creates creators" is self-destructive. Dr. Bosanquet dismisses language of this kind as mere "phrases disguising a contradiction." "If," he says, "a separate personal God wills the being of the human will, that must mean that the detail of the human will is absorbed in the divine will. It is a contradiction to say that God, being a person separate from man, wills that man should have a will; but that man can use the will as he pleases. To will a will is to will its detail." [1] I do not suppose that any Theist would accept the sentence "man can use his will as

[1] *Value and Destiny of the Individual*, p. 136.

he pleases " as an adequate description of the Theistic position in this matter, but it is undoubtedly true that a doctrine of creation must hold that God " produces the free as free," and if it be true that it is impossible to will freedom, Theism will be compelled to revise its view of the world in a very drastic fashion. But is there any ground for the assertion that to will freedom for another is impossible ? On the contrary, we find that the higher we rise in the scale of the subject-matter within which the will is exercised the more persistently does freedom enter into the end which is willed and form an essential element in it. A man who wills the existence of a machine, we may admit, wills the detail of the machine, and his purpose will fail in so far as the product of his intentional action fails to correspond with the preconceived idea. Freedom in machines would be as self-contradictory as it would be embarrassing. But will exercised in spiritual material is conditioned, when it is an enlightened will, by the will for freedom. If we think of a wise statesman taking thought for the future of his nation, or a wise father for the life of his child, we shall observe at once the vital distinction between the lower and the higher volitions. The statesman may be in a real sense a creator of his nation, he will have an ideal towards which he will intend that it should grow ; but it will be of the essence of that ideal that the nation should freely choose that which his insight has discerned to be best, that the general mind and

will should express itself in the choice of its principles and order. He will not snatch at a hasty Utopia imposed by dictatorship, nor if it were possible, would he seek to bring about the reforms which he desires except by persuasion. And this is because he wills freedom for his community as a fundamental element of the end itself. In the same way a wise father may truly be a creator of his son's life. But he will not purchase security from disaster at the expense of freedom. He will deliberately stand aside in moments of decision, because he wills for his son, not merely happiness or goodness, but the development of a free personality without which neither happiness nor goodness can exist. It is, therefore, so far from being true that to will freedom for others is impossible, that the higher acts of will include the creation of freedom as part of the end willed. It may, of course, be argued that all will on the part of God is inconceivable, and this is in fact the outcome of Dr. Bosanquet's view of the Absolute. But if we are not committed to a static conception of the Supreme Reality there is no reason to regard the will to produce free spirits as having exceptional difficulties. It is precisely this kind of will which our own experience would lead us to think of as the highest and most complete.

It is perhaps hardly necessary to spend much time on the objection to the possibility of creation which is founded on the meaning of the word "omnipotence." The argument that if free selves are created some

events are not directly due to the divine causation assumes an interpretation of omnipotence which we are not concerned to defend. Theism asserts that all events are ultimately to be traced to God, that without His allowance and concurrence they could not be, that all power to do or to will is derived from Him; but it does not hold that God is the direct agent in all action, or that every occurrence is the manifestation of His will. Against this largely verbal objection may be put an argument which, if it has no other value, is sufficient to expose the worthlessness of such abstract reasoning. It may be said that the possibility of the creation of a world of free spirits is implied in the conception of an omnipotent God; for if God is unable to create such a world He is clearly not omnipotent, and it would be a strange line of thought which, out of regard to the infinity of God, would imprison Him in His own omnipotence. But in truth this type of juggling with abstract and vague conceptions is of little value on one side or the other. For religion omnipotence simply means that the world depends upon God, and we cannot gain light upon the real problem by treating it as if it were a well-defined logical concept. To do that we must come to close quarters with the idea of creation. The meaning of omnipotence depends upon the meaning of creation and not *vice versa*.

III

Much of our perplexity about creation arises from our inveterate habit of thinking in terms of space. It may be that, as Bergson holds, the intellect is compelled by its nature to endure these spatial fetters; and if that is so we shall have to confess that creative activity, and indeed activity in general, is utterly beyond the grasp of reason: only by an act of intuition could it be apprehended. We need not take so extreme a position; but it is certainly true that the mind tends to extend those conceptions which are appropriate for dealing with systems extended in space to systems which are essentially different. A great part of the difficulty which is felt about creation is represented by the objector who says, "Created spirits are either part of God or they are not; if they are not they cannot be completely dependent upon Him, if they are they must be determined by the whole of which they are parts, and therefore can have no real independence or freedom." Now this way of stating the difficulty is based upon the tacit assumption that spatial and material conceptions are applicable to the problem of the relation of God to finite selves. But we shall, I think, find reason for believing that material and immaterial systems differ from one another in a very important respect, and that in the latter the relation of whole and part, if it is still possible to use the words, takes on a new character.

If we consider a member of a purely material system, say a wheel in a machine, it is undoubtedly true that the movement of the part is completely determined by its position in the system. Though, in a sense, it may exist apart from the machine, yet it has no being for itself, it exists as a possible member of a system from which it derives its significance. It is dependent on externality for its being and meaning. But the case is very different when we consider immaterial systems. There the parts, or rather the elements, are not connected together by a mere external relation: they interpenetrate. But, at the same time, they have a character and being-for-self which is wholly different from that of the wheel. An immaterial system is a whole consisting of diverse elements, each of which has, in some degree, a life of its own though not a life apart from the complex of which it is an element. If we think of the life of a purpose in our minds, or of ourselves as members of a highly developed community, we shall seize the difference at once. And let us notice that it is at least as impossible for an element in an immaterial system to exist in isolation as it is for a part of a material whole; dependence is not less complete but more thoroughgoing, penetrating to the internal nature of the element. Now the point which is relevant to our argument is simply this, that, as we rise from material systems to spiritual systems, the apparently contradictory qualities of complete dependence and being-for-self or relative

independence do in fact tend to be reconciled with one another. The purpose in the mind and the person in a community are both freer and more dependent than the wheel in the machine. The purpose may be in opposition to the general tendency of the mind which entertains it, yet it can have no being at all except as an element of that mind; the person may oppose himself to the ideals and conventions of his society, yet he depends for his life, for the ideals which he sets against the prevalent standards, for the conscience which has made him a rebel, on the community against which he asserts himself. That freedom and dependence should not be mutually exclusive but rather should increase together may sound a paradox, but the paradox is due to the subtle materialism which, perhaps necessarily, infects our thought. When, by an effort, we divest ourselves of the inherited prejudice that spatial systems afford the norm for all others, when we look at those systems which approximate to spirituality as they really are, we find that in fact the opposition between dependence and freedom is an illusion, that the more spiritual the system the less external the relation between its members, so much the more are dependence and freedom reconciled.

We may now venture to conclude that there is no inherent contradiction between the ideas of an Infinite God and of a created world of free spirits; but we shall be told that the idea of creation itself

has not been elucidated, and that it remains unintelligible. It may be admitted at once that creation is unintelligible if by that we mean that we cannot see "how it works"; but we may also venture to remark that creation is a fact of experience and possibly an ultimate fact. In the long process of development from the bare centre of sentiency to the civilised moral person which is the central fact of world-history, we cannot help noticing that the growth of creative activity is a salient characteristic. The spontaneity of the lowest centres, minute and almost negligible compared with later developments, is that which distinguishes them most clearly from inanimate things. And in the upper reaches of the line of upward movement the spontaneity has become a vast creative power, giving birth to civilisation, literature, and art. It is a mark of personality to be creative. We are all, in a measure, creators, and however difficult it may be to fit creation into our conception of the world, it is certain that a philosophy which could give no place to it would be very far from an adequate account of the world as we know it in experience. "A great deal of our activity is in some way or other corrective or preservative; but our most significant and positive functions are productive or creative, whether it is the creation of an institution, or of a work of fiction, or anything whatever which may be an object of contemplation or utility to others besides ourselves. Any intentional act, or series of acts, whereby we bring into

existence any *common* object is so far creative. The tendency, then, of the highly developed mind, especially under the influence of moral ideals, is to externalise its ideas, to make them part of the common world of objects."[1] If we are justified in holding the opinion that God cannot be less than personal, we are, it seems, committed to the view that He creates, for otherwise we should be denying to Him the possession of that quality which is pre-eminently a mark of the highest personality.

To understand creation, then, so far as that is possible, we must look at creative activity as it is known in our experience. It is because we are creators that we may hope to find a creative God, and, for the same reason, no other kind of God will really satisfy our needs. But before we proceed to draw out the implications of what Professor James Ward has called, with perhaps excessive caution, "a faint and distant analogy,"[2] we must notice a view which would deny the distinctive character of the activity on which our analogy is based. Dr. Bosanquet has dealt at some length with the subject of artistic creation, and has explicitly affirmed that there is no essential difference between the creative imagination and the logical understanding. "The phrases," he says, "'creative' and 'productive,' exercise in themselves a certain magic over our minds; and especially in elementary stages of art

[1] A. R. Whately, *The Inner Light*, p. 137.
[2] *Realm of Ends*, p. 239.

and in early phases of aesthetic training the imaginative process is apt to be opposed to logical derivation from reality, as the 'ought' in imperfect moral theory is contrasted with the 'is.'"[1] We may be grateful to Dr. Bosanquet for his analogy, because it gives us a hint of the kind of presupposition about the structure of the universe on which his view depends. It is true that moral and aesthetic theory are here closely connected. As we have seen, it is certainly required by an adequate moral theory that the "ought" should, in some sense, be rooted in the nature of Reality, and we cannot rest in an absolute opposition between the "ought" and the "is." But it is also true that any theory which would deny the real distinction between "ought" and "is," between the ideal and the actual, must, if it have the courage of its opinions, end in the conclusion that moral activity, the attempt to conform the actual to the ideal, is irrational. Thus it is clear that an ethical theory which is not contented to assassinate moral action must preserve the distinction between ideality and actuality, while refraining from exhibiting this distinction as an absolute opposition. In the same way, it is most true that the activity of mind in logical thought and in creative imagination is not entirely diverse, nor can we have one in isolation from the other. But to carry this truth to the extreme of identifying the concept with the intuition, the logical with the aesthetic, is to ignore a real

[1] *Principle of Individuality*, p. 392.

distinction which is a fact of experience. And in fact every one would admit that there is a distinctive quality about the productions of genius which is absent from the achievements of the logical understanding, so that we naturally speak of the originality and creative power of a poet or artist when it would be absurd to use those epithets of a scientific discoverer. The distinction is just. We do not necessarily imply that the artist is an absolute creator, since we must recognise that he makes use of pre-existing material. The Scholastic Theology is not wrong in teaching that, in the full sense, God alone creates. But the artist does produce something relatively new, an object which without the personality of its creator would never have had any existence at all. Newton did not create the law of gravitation, he discovered it. Shelley did not create the skylark, but his ode would never have been composed had he never lived, and, in that sense, Shelley is a creator while Newton is not. This originality and creative power which is supremely manifested in the greatest art is present in many other forms of activity. An institution bears the impress of its founder's personality and is more than a natural growth; it, too, has been created. It is this originality, this creative activity of man, however circumscribed, which offers us a way to the conception of a Divine Creator.

If we now proceed to explore the path suggested by artistic creation we may begin with the assump-

tion that the higher forms of creative work will be our surest guide. We shall be more immune from the danger of false analogy if we consider chiefly those forms of creation which are least concerned with "things," with matter and space. The manipulation of an external material will be less illuminating than the creation which is predominantly mental; we shall be nearer the truth if we think of God as the great Poet than if we think of Him as the supernatural Artisan.

> Poet! still, still thou dost rehearse
> In the great *fiat* of thy verse
> Creation's primal plot;
> And what thy Maker in the whole
> Worked, little maker, in thy soul
> Thou work'st, and men know not.[1]

Consider, then, the case of a great novelist. He imagines a certain number of characters and brings them into relation with one another. For a time they may be little better than lay figures, abstract types of human nature, pegs on which to hang the preconceived plot. If the novelist is a tradesman who is engaged in providing an article in considerable demand they will remain lay figures and his composition will be a more or less skilfully devised mechanism. But if he is a real artist the creative impulse will begin to play upon these dead and they will become alive. The characters achieve individuality. But in so doing they limit the freedom of their creator. Thenceforward he cannot do what he

[1] Francis Thompson, *Carmen Genesis*, II.

will with them; they take their destiny, as it were, into their own hands, and we are frequently told by novelists that their characters have refused to fit into the scheme which had been prepared for them in advance. "The creative personality creates not mere plastic material, but something to which, when created, he may have to submit."[1] The characters of the novelist possess, in fact, a relative independence; and yet they are completely dependent on him. When his tale is printed and has become an object of contemplation for others his fictitious persons acquire a further objectivity, and do not depend upon his thought alone for their continued existence; but before the work is made public, while the characters are objects of contemplation only to their creator, they are completely dependent upon him; apart from his thought they have no reality, and when he ceases to think of them they cease to be. We do not use this analogy to suggest that the work of a human author gives us complete understanding of the manner of God's creation. We are not supposing that we are all characters in a novel composed by a divine Author. What does seem to be evident is that, when we take the most striking examples of originative power in human experience as our guide, we find evidence that the two principles of dependence and freedom, which are alleged to be exclusive opposites, are reconciled in a remarkable degree.

The thought that the world is most fitly regarded

[1] Whately, *Inner Light*, p. 138.

as the work of a Creative Artist is one that has naturally suggested itself to speculative minds, and no one has treated it more suggestively than S. T. Coleridge in the *Biographia Literaria*[1] and elsewhere. But it has not seldom led to conclusions, or been used to suggest views of the world, which are very far from those which we are advocating. A recent instance of the anti-theistic use of this idea is to be found in Mr. Bertrand Russell's essay, *A Free Man's Worship*, which is written with such power that we are almost persuaded, while we read it, that Mr. Russell can really believe that man is free and able to worship. In the remarkable opening of that essay he has invented a kind of allegory which conveys the implication that, if the world is created at all, it can only be as an object of detached and ironic contemplation to its author. It is a drama in which the interest is derived from the fatuous illusions of the created beings. "The endless praise of choirs of angels had begun to grow wearisome, for after all did he not deserve their praise? Had he not given them endless joy? Would it not be more amusing to obtain undeserved praise, to be worshipped by beings whom he tortured? He smiled inwardly, and resolved that the great drama should be performed." But this use of the artistic analogy is based upon a misunderstanding of the nature of artistic creation. It imagines the artist to be able to stand completely outside his work and to become a mere contemplator

[1] Cf. *Biographia Literaria*, chap. xiii.

of it. Now this is what the artist, as such, can never do: in fact *qua* artist he is never a contemplator at all. He is immanent in his work, which is an expression of himself and an extension of his own being. Though the artist may pass from the creative activity to the critical, and to some extent stand outside his own creation, he can hardly so objectify it as to stand completely outside it, for he must always find himself living within it. Strangely enough it is Nietzsche who has provided us with the word which reveals the hollowness of the kind of satirical use of the artistic analogy which we are criticising in his great saying that every true work of art is created in a passion of love. There is truth in this. The work of art can never be to the artist a mere arrangement of words or images in which he has a purely impersonal interest. It is an objectification of himself; in his work he sees embodied, in some degree independently, his own personal life. If God creates the world as an artist creates He must love the world.

But if we may feel confident that those interpretations of the artistic analogy which would be abhorrent to a religious mind are without foundation in the artistic analogy itself, we have still to meet the objection that the analogy does not illuminate the real difficulties of creation. Professor Ward has complained that it breaks down just when our difficulties begin, and it cannot be denied that, when we think it out in any detail, we are compelled to realise that the light is not so full as we might desire. We

need not hope to find in it more than a clue, an indication that the concept of creation is beyond our complete grasp, not because it is self-contradictory, but because it is too large for our limited apprehension. And I think it may be shown that some of the points in which the analogy seems to be misleading or inappropriate are, in fact, points where we can see reason to suppose that a limited act of creation would differ from one absolute and complete. We may be led to think that some characteristics which are commonly believed to belong to artistic creation as such are, in truth, limitations and imperfections which the creative impulse constantly seeks to transcend.

An obvious difficulty is raised when we consider the place of the material in artistic expression. It may be said that all creation of an artistic kind with which we are acquainted is expression of emotion or intuition in some given medium. The artist moulds the pre-existent and imperfectly plastic material to his purpose, and, according to a famous saying of Goethe's, his triumph lies in his overcoming of the limits which the material imposes. It may be asked, Does not the application of this analogy to the creative work of God bring us back again to that very dualism against which the Christian doctrine of creation is a protest, and compel us to postulate a pre-existent matter which is not created? It must be recognised that in ancient philosophy this line of thought did lead to such a conclusion. "In Plato as well as Aristotle the cosmic process is regarded ultimately

under the analogy of the plastic artist who finds in the hard material a limit to the realisation of his formative thought."[1] But it may be questioned whether this insistence upon opposition and an alien material is really justifiable. Doubtless every aesthetic expression within our experience contains this element, but it may be that the opposition is a mark of finitude and imperfection and not an essential character of the creative activity. It could scarcely be maintained that the resistance of the material is in itself a part of the idea of artistic expression, nor does art's victory allow itself to be measured by the technical success with which obstacles are overcome. An artist who should choose a more difficult medium, when one more plastic lay ready to his hand, would be no artist but a virtuoso. The essence of art is expression; and, if we may follow Croce, the aesthetic activity is expression and nothing else. Technique is no part of the creative activity of art; the communication of the intuition of the artist to others by its embodiment in a physical medium may or may not follow on the expression which is independent of it.[2] At any rate, even if we are not able to agree that a material outside the consciousness of the artist is unnecessary, it is clear that the aim of the artistic impulse is so to permeate the material that it becomes, no longer alien, but one with spirit. And if that be so, there is no inherent contradiction in the thought

[1] Pringle-Pattison, *Idea of God*, p. 306, quoting Windelband.
[2] Croce, *Aesthetic*, E.T. p. 182.

that a perfect creative activity would have no material standing over against it, but the creative mind would find within its own riches the material of its working. Yet limitations of some kind there must be. Conditions must be imposed, otherwise the activity will be empty and unmeaning. But, I would suggest, we need not seek for the source of those conditions elsewhere than in the nature of God. They are derived not from outside the Divine consciousness but from within, and they arise from the fact that God is not being in general or abstract unity, but a living Person with a determinate nature which He cannot deny or contradict.

There is one point, and that a very important one, where the artistic analogy appears to desert us. In recent philosophical discussions it has been common to distinguish between "adjectival" and "substantive" reality, and theories have been opposed to one another on the ground of the kind of reality which they attribute to the finite person. Thus a view on which the finite self was a temporary manifestation of the Absolute and nothing more would be said to hold that a merely adjectival existence belonged to personality. It may be argued that, if we pressed the analogy of literary creation, we should be led to the conclusion that finite selves had no more than an adjectival reality, that they had no substantive existence, and this conclusion, it would be rightly felt, is more compatible with a pantheistic hypothesis than with theism.

Let us admit at once that our experience of creative thought offers us no analogy to the production by our mind of other minds which are independent centres of consciousness and activity. Strongly as we may assert the real existence of Falstaff and his objectivity with respect to ourselves and his creator, it is only by a pleasing illusion that we represent him as perceiving the world and acting in it in the same manner as we ourselves. In this respect the dullest dog who ever lived and even the idiot and the worm have the advantage of that gigantic figure. The gulf between the creative work of God and ours remains at the end, and we cannot doubt or minimise it. Nor can Theism wish to do so. It is no part of our hypothesis that we are gods, or that we could have created the world ourselves, *μόνος γὰρ ὁ θεὸς ἐποίησεν, ἐπεὶ καὶ μόνος ὄντως ἐστὶ θεός*.[1] At best our creation can be but the dim reflection of the perfect creative activity, a hint of its existence and its manner of working. But it cannot be reasonably maintained that this difference between God's creation and ours, which we admit and insist upon, deprives the analogy of all value. The antithesis between adjectival and substantival existence appears to me to be misleading. There are, after all, many kinds of adjectival existence. The colour of a man's hair may be said to be a property inherent in him at any given time. So also may his son be said to qualify his nature. But the son is in

[1] Clem. Alex. *Exhort. ad graecos*, iv.

a very different relation to the man than the colour of his hair. You may say, if you like, that Falstaff is an adjective of Shakespeare, but you do not by that phrase destroy the fact that Falstaff is, in some sense, a substantive entity. If "adjectival" be used to cover such cases as these we can only say that the doctrine of creation has no purpose to serve in denying that finite selves are adjectival, for it affirms that apart from God they cannot exist.

Even if we believe that creation is an eternal process we shall all agree that lectures on creation should have an end if not a conclusion. I must therefore omit much that might call for comment and refer briefly to one possible deduction from the line of thought which we have been following. It may be argued that a thoroughgoing application of the analogy of human creation would lead us back to that idea of a creation limited in time which we have rejected. A work of art, it will be argued, must have a beginning and an end. Its aim, as Aristotle would have said, is not the activity itself but the completion of the work, and the artist labours for the moment when he will be able to say "It is finished" and "It is very good." But this inference would, I am persuaded, be based on a misunderstanding of the creative impulse. That the work of creation comes to an end is no mark of its perfection but of its finitude. The joy of the artist is in creation itself, in the act of expression; and he would be attaining his highest good and his completest life if

he could be always creating. So must it surely be with God. Dickens has left on record the feeling of gloom which fell upon him when a novel was finished, as of one exiled from a world in which he had moved with delight and confidence. God is never exiled from the world, for it is no finished work, nor ever will be. Partial consummations there are of systems complete and ready to be absorbed in some wider life. For the individual there is at least a relative conclusion when "we bring our years to an end as a tale that is told"; but for the whole there is no beginning and no end. With tireless fertility the boundless Life brings forth beings who may be the expression and the objects of His love.

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